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SERIES

OF

SERMONS

ON

Practical and Familiar Subjects,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE
REV. ROBERT HENDERSON,
PASTOR OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MURFREESBOROUGH.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE.

Should any be desirous of knowing the author's motive in publishing the following discourses, let them rest assured, that neither money nor fame leads in this matter; though he has no objection to such a portion of both, as the public may think proper. It is of no use for a writer to pretend to more disinterestedness than he candidly feels. The veil is too flimsy not to be penetrated by men of discernment. The author of the following discourses, when a boy quite down in his teens, had his attention arrested, and fixed to divine things, in a very unusual and extraordinary way, with an account of which, he will not here trouble the public. Suffice it to say, that after having been the subject of an almost indescribable distress relating to spiritual subjects, for upwards of a year, he at length, through the great goodness of a merciful God, became the subject of a pleasing and delightful gospel hope; from which time, religion appeared to him the one thing needful; and far the most liberal contributor to human happiness, with which he ever had any acquaintance Being pleased beyond expression with this sacred thing, and in a state of perfect amazement that all hearing the precious gospel did not embrace it, he became impressed with the most insatiable desire of preaching the gospel to a world of ruined sinners. For a length of time, amounting to six months or peradventure more, he endeavored to banish this desire, as he saw no reasonable prospect of obtaining such a course of literature, as he thought then, just as he does now, necessary to so serious and important an undertaking However, all attempts to banish the inclination proving utterly abortive, he at length gained the permission of his mother, a poor widow, to make the trial of obtaining an education, for he was still a minor. He undertook the expensive matter of obtaining a classical course, without a dollar in hand, or one in prospect. And

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strange as it may appear, progressed by one mean or another, not upon charity either, till he completed such a course of literature as could be obtained in the western country, and never stopped in his progress till he had accomplished it. He cannot boast the advantages of any of the great northern foundations; and he never attempts to impose himself upon the world for what he is not. He put himself under the care of the Rev. Samuel Doak, then of Washington county, in that section of country which is now East Tennessee; a venerable gentleman whom he still respects highly as an instructor of youth; and many of whose students, at this hour, rank amongst the foremost professional characters in this state. In this last remark the writer leaves himself entirely out of view. Having prepared the way as well as his scanty means would allow, he devoted himself to the christian ministry, with a view as he then thought, and still hopes, to the glory of God, and the good of society; not doubting at the same time, that by going into another profession he could have made more than five times as much money. But his conscience had dictated, and his purpose was immovable.

Now, sirs, I have stated with simplicity, and without dissimulation, my motives in undertaking the holy christian ministry, and if I know my own heart, perfectly similar are the motives, in the view of which, I offer the following sermons to the public. Willing to speak when dead, and plead the cause of God my saviour, when my tongue shall have mouldered in the dust, I offer the following discourses to those who are willing to receive them. And I believe it is agreed on all hands, by the best judges, that they are offered at a sufficiently moderate price.

With regard to the dress in which these sermons are offered, little concern or ambition has been exercised, except for one or two things, which appear to me the great and principal object in the style of sermonizing. I have endeavored to be plain, lucid and intelligible; easily understood by every common capacity. This, with some suitable degree of energy, is all I have aimed at as to style. How far I have succeeded, a candid public will judge when they shall have read the sermons. I hope, however, I shall be easily understood. The flowery and ornamental have not been my aim, nor do I think they ought to be the aim of any man to a high degree in writing sermons,

designed to be practically and spiritually useful; "For my speech and my preaching were not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God;" I Cor ii, 4, 5. Eclat, as a fine belles letter scholar, has been no part of my aim in penning these little discourses, nor should it ever be in writing gospel sermons, were I to write a thousand more. What has the plain, unvarnished gospel of God the Saviour to do with courting human applause? I presume, sirs, a plain, unadorned statement of divine truth, made with simplicity and energy of language, is quite sufficient for gospel subjects, without the meretricious tinsel of alluring language. And I think, the writer on divine subjects, who is at much pains to shine in the latter way, has his reward But that reward I presume is rather the praise of men, than of God; poor, paltry, jejune reward; for my part, I am no friend to lowness of similitude, meanness of language, nor slovenliness of address in the pulpit; but acknowledge, I am, to great plainness and simplicity, and I think, Paul was so before me; I Cor. xiv, 19; "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding; that by my voice I might edify others, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue;" I Cor ii, 1; "And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom."

I must acknowledge candidly, that when I see a gospel minister hunting after high and unusual words, and manifestly aiming at polish and elegance of language on a plain gospel subject, it lets him down with me, and I cannot help viewing him as guilty of preaching himself, and neglecting Christ Jesus the Lord. So did not Paul preach; "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake."

These discourses have not been committed to any body for inspection. No corrections have passed upon them from the pen of any man living, with respect to sentiment, composition, orthography or any thing else. Such as they leave my pen, such shall the world see them, without any alteration from any body. If they possess any merit in any respect, let me have the credit undivided; if they possess defects, though great and many, let the blame attach to me, to whom it ought. I have some reasons for these things. With regard to sentiment, I am

tenacious ; I have written simply, and without dis
think, and should not like to have any sentiment altered. In times like these, when such a diversity of theological sentiments is abroad, I cannot summon up vanity enough to calculate on pleasing every body, and therefore have not tried to please any body. So far as I can judge of my own heart and motives, there is not one solitary sentence in these volumes written with a view to please or curry favor with any party or set of men on earth. And I can say with equal truth. there is not a solitary sentence composed with design to give offence to any man or set of men whom God has made. I cannot say I have endeavored to divest myself of party prejudice, and lay it aside, for the truth is, I am not conscious of any to be laid aside. Truth and duty, I trust, are my objects, and not men and names. Merit, duty, and good conduct, I love, honour, and approve, wherever I see them. Asperity, bitterness of spirit, and angry, ill tempered debates, are objects of my disapprobation, wherever they appear, and no name under heaven shall ever recommend them to me.

With regard to composition, if I have communicated my ideas fairly, intelligibly, and forcibly, the end I had in view in that is answered. If I have failed in these valuable things, which appear to me all important in composition, and communicated my ideas obscurely, unintelligibly and feebly, I suppose any correction which might have passed upon it, would do very little good ; the performance in that case would be so radically defective that no correction it could receive from another could do much toward setting it right. Moreover, if the composition were very defective and to be made quite good and acceptable by another hand, this would have set me to strutting in borrowed plumes; a thing which has always been the object of my implacable disgust. As I would much rather appear in the most genteel assembly in the nation in a coat of my wife's manufacturing, than in the finest broadcloth that ever crossed the Atlantic, provided it must be borrowed.

As to the orthography, I trust that will pass, provided the printers can so read the manuscript as to take the letter intended by the author. There is some danger here, but I trust in the care and attention of the gentlemen who are to print.

I trust with respect to composition, orthography, &c. they will be found such, as will pass sufficiently with the plain, honest, un-

lettered, and unaffected part of the community, that great class of society who will read them most, and amongst whom the author expects them to do most good if they do any, with any class.

With regard to the literati and the critics, let them treat this little western performance just as seemeth them meet. No doubt some criticisms can be made upon it with much propriety. If any should reach the author, at any time, or by any means that appear to him just, and made with a spirit of candour and benevolence, they will be thankfully received, and improved to the best advantage of which he is capable. And should any reach him of another nature, they will be received and appreciated according to what he thinks their desert.

Had the author set a higher estimate on a fine and finished style than he does, and attempted it, his opportunities for succeeding well, would have been very limited. A school to attend five days in the week, a numerous family to whom it was his duty to attend; a hundred times when he has set down to his pen, his attention has been called away to something else; thus has his attention been divided during his writing, except what was penned in the dead hours of the night, when all were in bed; circumstances very unfavorable to fine composition.

The author hopes it will be found in the perusal of these discourses that the promise in the prospectus has been fulfilled. The sermons he trusts, are plain and practical, and contain no embittered controversy. His own opinions he has stated with that plainness and simplicity which become divine truth, and defended them by scripture and reason as well as he could. For this he presumes no man of candor will blame him. Ill natured, illiberal and unbrotherly remarks on those who differ from him, he hopes none can say he has indulged in, as he is confident he has not intended it.

How these discourses may pass with mankind the author cannot presume to say, nor would it become him. They are committed to the public, accompanied with the author's prayers that they may be succeeded with the divine blessing to his dear fellow men, and be highly instrumental in promoting their best spiritual interests. One thing he can say with truth, and he hopes without vanity, and that is, that several of his hearers, as candid, enlightened, and pious as any in the society, have expressed their high delight, entertainment and spiritual

improvement from several of these same discourses, that are now going out into the world, when delivered from the pulpit Of this they have informed him with much tenderness and affection, sometimes by letter and sometimes in *propria persona* and this quite unsolicited; for he is not in the habit of asking his hearers, what they think of his sermons He hopes the same individuals may again have their feelings both pleasantly and profitably excited now, that they will see them in print, and read them at their leisure; and that they may have the same happy effect on ten thousands more, is the ardent and importunate prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

Pilgrims' Rest, April 1828.

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SERMON I.

THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE GOSPEL.

Luke, II. 10, 11.

"*For behold I bring unto you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.*"

THESE are the words of that heavenly messenger who announced the birth of Jesus Christ the saviour of the world, to certain shepherds, who were keeping watch over their flocks by night, in the land of Judea. The connection of my text is as follows: Augustus Cæsar, grand nephew of Julius Cæsar, the great Roman General, was now firmly seated on the imperial throne of Rome; his enemies being subdued on every hand, and the empire established in perfect tranquillity. In this prosperous situation of affairs, the emperor turned his attention to the internal concerns of the empire. In order that the imperial revenue might meet all the exigencies of the government, he issued a decree that all his provinces should be taxed; indeed the words of the historian are "that all the world should be taxed;" nor was this so very far from being the case, when all the provinces of the empire were taxed. That empire was then in its zenith. It covered chiefly all Europe,

a considerable part of Asia and no small share of the settled and known parts of Africa. As for our beloved America, neither Luke, the sacred historian, nor Augustus Cæsar, the Roman Emperor, knew any thing about it. For the greater conveniency of levying this tax it was part of the imperial decree, that the people should repair every one to his own city, whereunto he belonged. The Jews at that time, with many other nations, were tributaries of the Roman Government, and consequently obeyed this imperial decree. Amongst the rest, Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David; and took with him Mary his espoused wife, who was now far gone in her state of miraculous pregnancy. Whilst they were at Bethlehem the days were accomplished that the Virgin should be delivered, and she brought forth her first born son, and wrapping him in swaddling clothes, laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"There were in the same country shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night; and lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid." What appearance this angel of the Lord made, or what this glory of the Lord was like, which shone round about those shepherds, the sacred historian has not informed us, nor are we much concerned to know: Suffice it to say, these were phenomena out of the com-

mon track of nature, and as such greatly excited the alarm of these humble swains. This benevolent spirit from heaven, however, did not suffer them to remain long under the influence of their uneasy apprehensions; but by addressing them in the pleasing language of my text, gave their fears to the wind. "And the angel said unto them, fear not, &c I am not come to excite any alarm, nor to do you the smallest injury; but on the other hand, to announce the best tidings ever heard under heaven, and which shall be to all people, "for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." This, sirs, is the connexion of my text, and this the occasion of the words being spoken.

The following propositions I presume are contained in my text;

I. That the Lord Jesus Christ then born and whose birth my text announces was, and is, the Lord of life and glory, or in other words, he is a divine person, equal in perfection, power and glory with the eternal God and father of all.

II. That the birth of this divine and exalted person is matter of the greatest joy ever announced to our world.

III. That this Christ the Lord and his sacred benefits, are not to be confined, in the preaching of the gospel, to any one nation or people; but the joyful news is to be proclaimed to all nations, kindreds, and people, so far as opportunity may serve.

I design to illustrate each of these propositions a little, and in the order in which I have mentioned

them, and then conclude with some inferences and application.

I. I am to illustrate this great foundation truth of the christian religion: That the extraordinary babe whose birth is announced in my text, was and is the Lord of life, and glory, a divine person equal with the father.

Now, in illustrating this great and fundamental doctrine of our divine religion, this glory of our gospel, I think the rational way to proceed is to enquire first, what Jesus Christ claimed to be, and whether the testimonials which he adduced, are sufficient to substantiate such claim, and then adduce the direct testimony of the Apostolic writers.

Let it be well recollected here that this is one of those subjects in theology concerning which we know nothing at all, only what we have from the book of God. There are certain theological subjects on which we may reason with much propriety and effect, from the light of nature, as for example, concerning the existence of a God, his divine perfections, &c. Here the sun, moon, and stars read us loud and intelligible lectures; but, sirs, when we enquire on the glorious subject now before us, all the volume of creation is silent, as are the mansions of death. We must be indebted for all we know to the sacred records; and those who are too proud to learn here, must remain ignorant, and answer it on another day and in another place. But let such well remember, the ignorance is wilful, and as such is of the most criminal description. We state then that Jesus

Christ claimed to be God equal with the father. Gospel by John, ix, 35—38, inclusive. Here we find when Jesus Christ asked the man once blind and whom he had miraculously restored to his sight, if he believed on the Son of God; this highly obliged man replied ardently, "who is he Lord that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him thou hast both seen him, and he it is who talketh with thee." Then the blind man answered and said, "Lord I believe, and he worshipped him." Now, sirs, in all candor and plain common sense, did not Jesus Christ on this occasion claim to be God? Did he not act like a God? Did he not receive divine worship? Was it in character for him to receive that worship, if he were no more than a mere creature? Did the angel at whose feet St. John fell, in order to worship him, receive the proposed worship, or did he forbid the worship, directing John to worship God, the proper object? and giving the reason why he would not receive the worship, that John's fellow servant only was there, and one of his brethren, the prophets, and not a divine person at all; Rev. xxii, 8 and 9. Was the angel then a better character than Jesus Christ? Be Christ what he would then, he unquestionably claims in this passage to be God, and his claim is all we are attempting at this moment to establish. Again, let me turn your attention to the gospel by John, x, from the 30th to the 38th, both inclusive. In the 30th verse saith the saviour "I and my father are one." When he made this declaration the Jews took up stones to stone him. When

he asked them why they indulged so murderous a design against him, for which of the many good works he had done, they designed stoning him; the Jews answered him, that for a good work they were not about to stone him, but for blasphemy, and because he being a man, made himself God, verse 33. Now, sirs, did the Jews or did they not, understand Jesus Christ asserting he was God, when he said that he and his father were one? It is manifest they did understand him to assert that he was God, because they proposed stoning him to death for blasphemy. Did they understand him right or wrong? They manifestly understood him right. Had they understood him wrong, had the Saviour not intended to teach his divinity in the above passage, would he not have relieved their minds at once, by telling them they had quite mistaken his meaning. But we find that instead of this he still insists on what he had asserted, and refers them to the evidence which incontestibly proves it. Then, sirs, there is no doubt but that Jesus Christ claimed to be God. Now, if he has furnished us evidence sufficient to substantiate this claim to our satisfaction, then the point must be yielded, and the humble christian may well exult that the Jesus whom he serves is very God.

With what candour and fairness has the blessed Jesus treated mankind with regard to this most interesting point in christian theology, and how entirely satisfactory the evidence he has furnished, for our conviction. He does not require us to believe his divinity on his mere *ipse dixit*, but

refers to testimony of a different kind, and that the very best the nature of the case admits, his miraculous operations. See verses 37, 38, of the passage last quoted. "If I do not the works of my father believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the father is in me, and I in him." O blessed Jesus, how fair, how candid, how impartial!!! My soul adores as I examine. The evidence is that of miracles. See the blind receive their sight at his commanding word. See the dumb speak, the deaf hear, and the lepers cleansed. These facts existed. Yes, thank God, the benevolent saviour, they existed beyond controversy, and here is founded greatly our faith and our hope. Permit me to turn you to an instance or two. See the blessed Jesus approach the little town of Bethany where a certain Lazarus lay entombed, who now had been four days dead. See the disconsolate sisters Mary and Martha meet the saviour; see them cast themselves on his benevolent arm, crying in their agony, "Lord if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." Jesus assured them for their consolation, their brother should be restored. See him approach the tomb. Hear him cry "Lazarus, come forth." At his all commanding voice, see the dead man vivified. See him come forth bound in his grave clothes and napkin. Was not this with the numerous other miracles he wrought sufficient evidence to show he was what he claimed to be? and for that purpose it is adduced. Suppose a man should appear in our assembly to-day, declaring

himself dispatched immediately by God in an extraordinary manner, to reform the world. On what evidence would you believe him? Not on a bold pretence, set up with a confident air. I confess I would not however. But should he in testimony of his mission restore to life my wife, my mother or my friend, and let me eat and drink with them as Mary and Martha and the Jews did with Lazarus, my mind, naturally sceptical enough, would yield. On this evidence I would believe.

Am I asked here if the human senses are not fallacious and very prone to deceive us. Might not the resurrection of Lazarus or others have been all a trick played off artfully on the senses of the spectators? To this question I answer no; unless our very existence, the material world, and pleasure, and pain, and every thing else be a trick. That the senses are in many instances extremely fallacious and need to be corrected by our reason, we are ever ready to acknowledge, but, sirs, not in cases of plain matter of fact. If the report of our senses may not be safely accredited in such instances of which we are qualified to judge; how could any adjudication ever take place in a court of justice? Was there ever a particle of evidence went to a court and jury yet, otherwise than through the senses? Are not the senses the natural and proper inlets of all the knowledge we possess in the world? Does the man exist on earth who never saw any, that can tell you the difference between scarlet and blue? Carry this nonsensical scepticism into a court of justice and let it be exercised there, and justice exists no more.

2. The Apostles are clear and decided on this point, and place the doctrine of the Saviour's divinity beyond all dispute. Phil. ii, 6, "who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal with God." Here the full equality of Christ with the father is taught. Then I presume it is strictly logical to say if the son is equal with the father, and the father be divine, the son is the same. Col. ii, 9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." By the Godhead I understand the divine nature or essence; but if this be correct, then the Apostle's assertion is that the divine essence is in Christ. 1 Tim. iii, 16, "And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

Now, permit me to ask where is this great mystery of Godliness spoken of by the Apostle, if not in the Saviour's divinity? Remember, God was manifest in the flesh. And if Christ were nothing more than a great man, there was no uncommon mystery about it; God has made many great men.

In Heb. i, 3, Christ is represented as the "brightness of the father's glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power." Now permit me to ask can any arm but that which is omnipotent uphold all things? In verse 6th of the same chapter he saith, "Let all the Angels of God worship him" And does the great God command the

angels to worship a mere creature? Verse 8th, "Thy throne O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom." In verses 10th and 11th, the father continues the address to the son by the peculiar name of Lord, and he ascribes to him the creation of the heavens and the earth.

3. The representation given of the general judgment, Mat. xxv, 31, *ad finem*, surely puts the divinity of the blessed Jesus beyond all question. "When the son of man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," &c. &c. &c. Does not this passage represent the Lord Jesus Christ, as performing all the functions of the Universal Judge, and assigning mankind their future distinct abodes? Now can any thing be more preposterous than to suppose the Universal Judge a mere creature. Thus, sirs, we conceive it is proved beyond rational contradiction, that the babe whose birth is announced in my text is a divine person, and God equal with the father, if the Holy Scriptures are to decide the point; and we informed you in the outset, that we acknowledge no other umpire, nor is it at all right that we should.

II. We now proceed to illustrate our second proposition, that the birth of Jesus Christ is the source of the greatest joy ever announced to our world. This, we conceive it is for the following reasons.

I. Because our souls thereby can and may be saved, consistently with the perfections of Deity and the dignity of the divine government, which they could not have been, without the intervention of the blessed Redeemer. Without Jesus Christ, mankind were helpless, ruined and undone forever; irrecoverably lost! They were all sinners and had apostatised from God; Rom. iii, 10—20 inclusive. Gen. vi, 5—7, which scripture testimonies, are strongly corroborated by matter of incontestible fact. Witness the first family of human kind. There we see a brother's hand reeking with a brother's blood, shed too, expressly because he was a righteous man, and because the Lord had respect to him and to his offering; Gen. iv, 8. And if we look into the history of human kind from that early period down to the present hour, what do we find but a foul and blotted page, stained with the recital of crimes foul and horrible, and that in every country, and every age? Such was the moral state of man. By our obedience to the divine law we could not be saved; Rom. iii, 20; Gal. iii, 10—12. Such, sirs, was our deplorable situation without the intervention of a Saviour. But by Jesus Christ we can be saved from this ruinous situation, "For he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." "And by him all that believe, are justified from all things; from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;" Acts, xiii, 39. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God

hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" Rom. iii, 24—26.

Jesus Christ in order to redeem us, suffered the most excruciating torments on our behalf; Isaiah, liii, 4—6; Mat. xxvi, 38; Mat. xxvii, 33—50. Now the Lord is well pleased with the believing sinner for his righteousness sake; Isaiah, xlii, 21.

2. Another exceeding cause of joy to the true believer, resulting from the interposition of Jesus Christ, is, that thereby he shall not only escape hell, and all the sad variety of suffering to which he stood exposed, as a sinner; but shall be received to heaven and everlasting blessedness, where he shall see his exalted Saviour face to face, and rejoice in his presence forever; Rev. vii, 9, *ad finem*, Gospel of John xiv, 1—3.

3. The birth of Jesus Christ is matter of exceeding joy, not only on account of the personal happiness and safety which will result to ourselves, as individuals, if we believe on his name, but because thereby God is glorified and the good of society promoted; verse 14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all men." Certainly that which promotes the happiness and benefit of mankind, must afford joy and satisfaction to every benevolent and well disposed mind: and not to rejoice in the happiness and welfare of our fellow men, argues a most depraved and malignant temper of heart. It would show that the happiness of others was rather a source of sorrow and regret, than felicity to our selfish

souls: than which no temper could assimilate us more to the fiends of darkness.

That the coming of the blessed Jesus and the consequent introduction of Christianity, has greatly meliorated the condition of human society, I think cannot be reasonably made a question, by any man of intelligence acquainted with ancient and modern times, or even the present state of the different nations of the earth where christianity has, and has not, spread its benign influence.

How far preferable is the condition of the present nations of the world where christianity has obtained, to that of those where it is not yet known? How much better are civil rights understood, and all relative and social duties discharged? Compare the present state of Europe or America with that of Hindostan. See the inhabitants of the one enjoying rational liberty and civil rights, while the other is enslaved and degraded to the last degree, and suffering all the evils which a weak, ignorant and gloomy despotism can inflict with its iron rod. See the inhabitants of our happy and christian republic paying their rational adorations to the one, true, eternal and Almighty God; and offering him that best of all human sacrifices a broken and contrite spirit on account of sin. While the inhabitants of Hindostan are bowing before the frightful idol Juggernaut, or prostrating themselves before the wheels of his enormous car. Such is the blindness of Hindostan paganism. What has not the gospel of the Redeemer done for Otaheite and other South Sea islands, in the last quarter century? How has its benign influ-

ence amended the condition, and promoted the happiness of this lately benighted people? See them when the ship Duff arrived there with the missionaries, in the year of our Lord 1796, sacrificing their sons to devils, and in such an impure and savage state, that the sacred virtue of chastity, seems not to have been known on the island. See them now reverently worshipping the adorable Deity in no less than 66 chapels, consecrated to the true God, every sabbath, as well as at a great many other times. Now, sirs, can we be at any loss to say whether the condition of these people is greatly meliorated and human happiness of course promoted? Surely, then, the birth of Jesus Christ must be tidings of great joy.

It is conceded as soon as objected, that great and desolating wars have been carried on in modern Europe, amongst sundry nations, in which christianity has been professed, and its forms respected by numbers of the people. But permit me to ask who, in all candour, has been deepest in these enormities? Were they not men who were professedly deistical in principle, though they happened to live in countries professedly christian? But in modern Europe, bad as matters have been in certain cases, and extensive as may have been the carnage, especially when Alexander and Napoleon met in a general engagement, what has taken place equal in point of enormity to the massacre at Delhi, in Hindostan, about the middle of the last century, by Nadir Shah, alias Khouli Khan, king of Persia invited into India, by Nizam, principal general of the great Mogul.—

While Nadir Shah lay with his mighty army in the neighbourhood of Delhi, an affray happened in that city, in which some Persians were killed. Nadir Shah on receiving the intelligence, marched to the city, to revenge the affront. As he approached, he was fired on from the terrace, and some of his principal officers were killed; on which he let loose his powerful cavalry, with orders to cut to pieces man, woman and child promiscuously, who executed the sanguinary order by putting to the sword one hundred thousand human beings without distinction of age or sex, while he sat sullenly in the mosque of Roushan a Dawlah, and contemplated the disgraceful scene.

That christianity has not made more of the human race happy, I presume, is no argument against its meliorating tendency. The reason of this is because it is so partially received. May I illustrate great things by small? Suppose then, the medical faculty to have discovered a medicine which would infallibly cure every man labouring under the influence of the malignant yellow fever, who would swallow the potion; suppose also, that here lie one hundred patients ill in this fever; the physician proposes his medicine, assuring them they shall all be healed. Now, suppose ten of the diseased take the medicine and receive a perfect cure: but the ninety, instead of taking the medicine, spend their time in abusing and railing at the physician, and die of the disease. Would their death prove the medicine to be ineffectual because it did not cure men who persisted obstinately in refusing to take it? This is easily applied to the case under consideration.

III. Christ and his benefits are not to be confined to any one nation or people; but the joyful news is to be published to all nations and people, so far as opportunity may serve and they shall be disposed to receive the glad tidings. "Behold," says the angel, "I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." For the better understanding this part of the angel's address, be it recollected that the revelation of God to man under the Jewish dispensation, was confined to the Jewish nation. To that were committed exclusively the lively oracles of God. But says the Angel to the shepherds, "Behold I bring unto you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." But do not suppose the blessings, to be conferred by this saviour, are to be confined to the Jews; they are to be conferred equally on the Gentiles. He is to be a Saviour for all people; every nation and people, hearing of this divine Messiah, and being disposed to embrace him, shall be heartily welcome. None hearing his gracious name shall be excluded from the riches of his grace, unless they exclude themselves, by impenitency and unbelief And as no nation hearing of Christ shall be excluded from his grace, so neither shall any individual of any nation. These good tidings of great joy shall be to all people without limitation or exception. "The spirit and the bride say come; and let him that heareth say come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely;" Rev. xxii. 17.

1. Learn from this subject, that the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ is a doctrine of our holy religion; plainly and unequivocally taught, in the sacred records, directly and by fair implication.—And we conceive a belief of this sacred doctrine and a proper improvement of it to be essential to salvation, John xiv, 1; 1st epistle of John, ii, 23. This is the great foundation stone of the christian fabric, and cannot be discarded by mankind, when proposed to their acceptance, but at the hazard of their salvation. As to the objection made to this great doctrine on account of the difficulty of understanding it, it vanishes at once with the intelligent and candid mind, when we recollect that we are not required to understand it. We are required to believe it on the testimony of the Lord; but there is no divine requirement that we should understand it. But why should deists and socinians start this objection to our holy faith, and in doing this act so inconsistently with themselves? Do they not both admit that God has eternally existed, and had no beginning. Now which is the greater mystery of the two, the existence of a being, who never began to be or the hypostatical union? And how many things are there, which we all believe, and yet confess we cannot understand? Who amongst us understands the union of his soul and body? What deist or socinian can inform me satisfactorily how his body affects his soul, and his soul his body? Yet who but an absolute sceptic doubts whether he possesses both?

2. From this subject learn the unutterable dignity which this doctrine communicates to christianity

Its author is divine, even the Lord of glory. as we hope has been fully and satisfactorily proved.

3. Learn from this subject the lost and deplorable condition of mankind by nature; if none can rescue from ruin but a Saviour that is divine; then his condition must be most deplorable indeed.—And how readily ought he to accept the blessed Redeemer.

4. Learn from this subject how broad the basis of encouragement is for sinners to turn from their sins and follies, and to embrace the blessed Saviour offered in the gospel. Is he, as this subject so copiously informs us, the impartial Saviour of all men that believe? Are the joyful tidings of the gospel to be proclaimed to all mankind and are all invited, and welcome to come? Will the blessed Jesus cast out none who come to him by faith? Mat. xi, 28. Then let all take encouragement, and make a believing approach to the blessed Saviour.

5. Learn from this subject finally the benign nature and the holy excellency of the christian religion. Those who embrace it are saved with an everlasting salvation. They are rendered humane, benevolent and beneficent; honest, just and upright. The christian religion gives a tone to the morals of society much in favour of human rights and human happiness. "Peace on earth and good will to men," are prominent features in this divine religion. May the good Lord of his infinite mercy give it currency in our world, till the earth is filled with his glory. AMEN AND AMEN.

SERMON II.

MEN PERSUADED TO BE CHRISTIANS.

Acts, XXVI, 28, last Clause.

"*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*"

THESE, my brethren, are the words of king Agrippa, addressed to St. Paul, when a prisoner and pleading his cause before him by permission, at Cæsarea. And no doubt they contain a very correct specimen of the exercises of a great many other people in the world, besides king Agrippa.—A number there are, who are almost, but alas, they are only almost, persuaded to be christians.

The connection of my text is this: St. Paul on a certain occasion, was basely assaulted by the mob in Jerusalem, who, no doubt, would have killed the man outright, had he not been rescued from their rage by a certain Lysias, the military commander of the place; who sent him down to the metropolis Cæsarea, that he might stand his trial, and receive the just reward of his deeds, if he were an evil doer; or that he might be honourably acquitted, if innocent, and his innocence be made plainly to appear. Who this man Paul was, I suppose Lysias neither knew nor cared. But this much he knew, that whoever he might be, or whatever might be his crimes, he ought not to be

torn to pieces, without a trial, by a savage and outrageous mob. In this, Lysias certainly thought very correctly. For of all things that ever yet obtained in the social state, mobs are one of the most dangerous; and to their suppression, every good citizen will contribute, as he may have it in his power. Wherever mobs obtain, neither life, liberty nor property is safe. This infuriated, many headed monster, has no stopping place. When St. Paul was prosecuted at Cæsarea, he made his defence with so much justice and spirit as greatly to confound his accusers; and reasoned with so much effect of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, that Felix, the Roman governor trembled on the bench, and in his perturbation of mind, dismissed the prisoner, saying, "go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." With great propriety, and much good judgment, did Paul reason before Felix, his excellent auditor, of righteousness, temperance and judgment. Felix was a most unjust and rapacious governor; therefore, reasoning on justice before him was quite appropriate. He was at that very time living in a bed of daily, and deliberate adultery, with the wife of Azizas, king of the Emesenes, whom he had found means to seclude from the bed of her lawful husband; therefore reasoning of temperance was no less appropriate. And certainly of all the sanctions ever addressed to the consciences of men, that of a judgment to come is the most solemn and interesting.

When Paul had been about two years a prisoner in Cæsarea, Porcius Festus succeeded Felix in

the administration of the government. When Felix retired from office, he left Paul bound, however thoroughly he might have been convinced of his innocence, as he wished to please the Jews. A few days after Festus had entered on the administration, he went up from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, where he had no sooner arrived, than he was ardently petitioned by the chief priests and principal men amongst the Jews, to have Paul, the prisoner, removed from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. This petition they made with the most wicked and sanguinary design; for they had men then lying in wait to assassinate him, and they wished him removed, only that these assassins might have the opportunity of performing their wicked design. Whether Festus penetrated their sanguinary design or not, I do not know, but be his motive what it might, he did not grant their petition; but informed them, he would go down shortly to Cæsarea, and if they could bring any thing against the prisoner to do so, and they should have a fair and open hearing. A considerable number of them accordingly went down and accused the prisoner, and brought against him sundry accusations, not a single one of which, were they able to substantiate. Though Festus had very correctly refused to remove the prisoner, at the request of the Jews, yet so willing was he to please these Jews, that he asked the prisoner whether or not he was willing to go to Jerusalem, and there be judged! To which Paul independently and indignantly replied he would not; and appealed to Cæsar. Paul it appears knew his privileges, and how to manage his own business

as well as any body amongst them. Shortly after this, King Agrippa, with his Queen Bernice, came to Cæsarea to salute Festus, where, when he had been for the space of some days, and the common place topics of conversation were nearly exhausted, Festus informed the king of an extraordinary prisoner, one Paul, who was left there in chains by Felix. The relation Festus gave the king respecting this prisoner, greatly excited his curiosity, and he desired an interview with him. On the next day when the court was collected, and King Agrippa, and his Queen Bernice with great pomp, Paul at the command of Festus was brought in, that Agrippa might hear him. When the court was thus collected, and Paul brought in, and all things in readiness, for audience, Agrippa told Paul he was at liberty to speak for himself. Paul very politely told his majesty, he was quite happy to answer before him concerning those things whereof he was accused of the Jews, because he knew he was expert in all customs, and questions relating to these people. He then went on before the court, to give a very interesting narrative of his former manner of life among the Jews; his conversion on his way to Damascus; the extraordinary revolution of his views, &c. In this extraordinary narrative the court appears to have been deeply interested, until Governor Festus, I presume not understanding the subject well, interrupted the prisoner with no small degree of rudeness, saying "Paul thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad;" verse 24. To this interruption of the Governor the prisoner replied with great

dignity and firmness, but at the same time due decency and respect; "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness;" verse 25; and in verse 26 appeals to the King, that he, as a man of general information must know it, for this thing was not done in a corner. In verse 27th St. Paul makes use of the address to the king which logicians call an address *ad hominem*, that is, presuming in favour of the hearer, and which is a very artful one. "King Agrippa believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest?" To this address the king replied in the language of my text: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian," as if he had said, "prisoner I do believe the prophets as thou statest and not only so, but almost thou persuadest me to be a christian." Would to God, replied this benevolent christian, not only thou but all that hear me this day were not only almost but altogether such a one as I am except these bonds;" verse 29. Thus, we find king Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a christian, and was brought at least to a very solemn stand in his religious sentiments and feelings by the address of this prisoner. And thus, sirs, we presume it is with many people to this hour. They are almost, but alas, they are only almost, persuaded to be christians; they do not come to that decided determination on the part of christianity, which is their reasonable and indispensible duty.

I. I design to point out some of those things which almost persuade these hesitating people to be christians, and which same things under the sacred influence of the divine spirit are instrumental

in persuading other people to become altogether so.

II. I shall point out some of those things which prevent these hesitating people from coming to that full and decided determination on the part of Christ and religion, which is their indispensible duty. And then conclude by urging a few persuasives on them, to induce them to become not only almost, but altogether, christians.

I. I am to state a few of those things which almost persuade these hesitating people to become christians, and which under the influence of the divine spirit have been instrumental in persuading others to become altogether so.

1. One thing which I presume weighs much with many is a sense of moral obligation and duty to God, of which all men feel something; I suppose there are but few men, but who when they take into serious consideration, the relation they sustain to God, as his creatures, his dependent creatures, and the relation he sustains to them as their creator, preserver, and benefactor, feel that it is their duty practically to acknowledge him. This almost determines them to be christians.—That most men have such a sense of moral obligation as we suggest, appears to have been the decided opinion of St. Paul; Rom. i. 19—22, "Because that which may be known of him is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood, by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

2. I presume another thing which goes far to persuade many to become christians, is the decided superiority of the christian religion to every other religion in the world, or that ever was in it. There are but three other kinds of religion in the world that I know of: the Pagan, the Mahometan, and the Jewish. As for Deism, I call that a privation of all religion. And what man is there of the smallest reflection, but who, on a view of the comparative merits and demerits of these different kinds of religion, must see at once, that the decided superiority, is on the part of christianity and that it approves itself to be from God? What is the Pagan but a jumble of folly, impurity, obscenity, and downright wickedness? See them acknowledge a thousand Gods. And what was too mean to be admitted into the Pantheon? See the ancient Greeks and Romans, those most civilized nations of antiquity, in pompous procession march out, and prostrate themselves before an ox, a grim ox of the field, in adoration; and these, sirs, not merely the rabble of the people but the constituted authorities of the state. The cat was a very principal deity with the Egyptians, and so sacred was this Egyptian's God, that if a man happened to kill one, only by chance, nothing less than his blood must atone for his crime. He must die without redemption. The religious rites performed in honour of the Goddess Venus at Apphac on Mount Libanus, consisted of mere impurities, and those so shocking, I will not offend your ears by rehearsing them in this promiscuous and very decent assembly. For proof, I refer you to Doct. Fuller's

gospel, its own witness, and Doct. Lelands view of the necessity and advantages of revealed religion.

Human sacrifices were offered to the Gods in almost all ancient heathen countries. This was eminently the case amongst the ancient Carthagenians. One instance out of many permit me to adduce; when this ancient Republic contended with that of Rome for the mastery of the world in the second punic war, they were shamefully defeated in a pitched battle, and the cause for which they contended was lost. As soon as the troops who survived this disgraceful defeat returned home, a council of state was held, for the purpose of enquiring into the matter, into the probable cause of this defeat. The result of the investigation was, that they had been impious, and had offended the Gods, and were therefore abandoned of them in the day of battle. It was common with these people when they entered on a great campaign or enterprize, to offer a sacrifice of three hundred youths, and two hundred infants, all selected from the best blood in the commonwealth. On this occasion they had neglected their duty. Not indeed that they had not offered the usual sacrifice in point of number. This they had done. But here lay the fatal deficiency, they had contented themselves with selecting the victims from the common orders of the people, in whose veins the blood was not rich enough to propitiate the offended deities.—They made an atonement by selecting youths, and children from the first families, and then rested satisfied, that their duty was done. Christian mother, pause and bless your God, that your lines

have fallen to you in pleasant places, where no blood-stained ruffian may come and snatch your smiling or your crying infant, from your throbbing breast, and cast it into the fire to Moloch. Thank the God of benevolence you are better taught; you are taught the sacrifice your God requires, is that of a broken and contrite spirit, on account of sin; and not the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul. But why need we go so far back as the ancient republic of Carthage for proof that Pagans offered human sacrifices? We may find a sufficiency of them much nearer our own times. Witness the South Sea Islanders when the ship Duff, arrived in Otaheite in the year of our Lord 1796, or 1797. Capt. Wilson and sundry of the missionaries, wrote back that they found these Islanders offering their children in sacrifice to devils. As authority for the above recited Carthagenian history, see Mavor's Universal History, vol. 5. a celebrated modern historian. The Mahometan religion admits of almost equal impurities. According to that corrupt system, every man may have four wives and as many concubines as may please to live with him, and he can maintain. And even Heaven itself is represented in the Alcoran as a sensual paradise. This religion was propagated partly by the sword, and partly by the intrigues of a wealthy and very artful impostor. The Jewish religion was once of divine authority and of course binding on the consciences of men; but is now set aside by the glorious dispensation of the gospel. But was not even this religion loaded with purifications, rites, ceremonies and ablutions,

which rendered it burdensome to the worshipper? And was it not far short of the spirituality and simplicity of the glorious gospel?

When we turn our eyes to the gospel we see a religion of divine and glorious simplicity worthy of God to require, and worthy of man to perform; a religion, whose essence is love, and whose rites and forms are the most simple and holy.—This religion requires a pure and spiritual worship. John iv, 24, "God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." How pure and holy is the morality required by the gospel? see Mat. v, 27, to the end. Thomas Paine, that drivelling retailer of other men's objections to christianity, has but one objection that appears to be original and really his own, and that does as little credit to his head as to his heart. The objection is this, that the gospel is defective in point of morality, that it contains no adequate system of ethics. He says, "There are a few fragments of morality thinly scattered through the gospel." This objection is Thomas Paine's, it is original, such as it is, and belongs to this sneering author exclusively. Other infidels, the most ingenious and erudite that ever wrote, are enamoured with the purity and excellence of the gospel ethics, and give the gospel its full credit, speaking of it in terms of highest commendation. And Rousseau speaks of it in terms of rapture and admiration. Permit me to give you a few, and but a very few, on the present occasion, of these fragments of morality, of which this sneering writer so contemptuously speaks. As a specimen

take Mat. vii, 12, the words of our blessed Lord, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you; do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Now, sirs, permit me to ask where, out of the bible and not extracted from it, can there be found such a system of ethics as these twenty-six words contain? Another fragment, as this writer calls it, of christian morality, you may see in Rom. xii, 9, to the end. This read at your leisure and let these suffice as specimens of hundreds more.

And inasmuch as all mankind are sinners, and the man who feels the stings of a guilty conscience, feels also a strong desire to know how he may be delivered from the wrath of God due to sin; the gospel comes to his relief. This blessed gospel informs him "That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses, 2 Cor. v, 19. This gospel informs him that repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, are the great things required of him that he may escape the vengeance of the Lord due to sin. Mark xvi, 16, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." Luke xiii, 3, "I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." John's Gospel iii, 36; "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him." Now the reflecting mind taking all these things into consideration, is almost persuaded to be a christian.

"The trials and calamities with which all

mankind meet, in a greater or less degree, in this world, are the means of almost persuading some of them to be christians, and are the means of persuading others altogether, under the influence of the divine spirit. The man that has had a little experience in life, and acquaintance with the world, has met with many disappointments and losses of one kind or another; he has met with many things to excite his chagrin and disgust. He has found the sanguine expectations of his younger and inexperienced years quite disappointed, and that there are but a very few of the human family worthy of much confidence. He has found his confidence in many instances betrayed, and sometimes to his extreme disadvantage. He has felt, perhaps, greatly to his mortification and not a little to his loss, the propriety and truth of that scripture caution in Jeremiah ix, 4, "Take ye heed every one of his neighbour and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders." These things have greatly lowered his calculations of happiness from the world. Yea, farther, he has found even his very comforts themselves become killing. He has found when he thought himself just about to grasp the very clusters of felicity, they have, with admirable dexterity, eluded his grasp, and left him nothing to hold, but what, like Ezekiel's roll, was all written over with grief, lamentation and woe! Say, my dear friends, has not this, or something very like it, been your experience? On a certain occasion, my dear sir, you received the heart with the hand of the woman you dearly loved. The nuptial rites

were celebrated with joy and gladness, in the presence of smiling and approving friends and parents, while wine and festive songs, and social glee, proudly crowned the board. Happiness you called your own, and almost turned saint, from gratitude. Poor man! How soon your sparkling joys were checked! In the mysterious Providence of the Almighty, this lovely woman was called down to the cold, cold chambers of death. A ghastly and ravening disease seized her delicate frame, and mocking the power of medicine, and the masters of the healing art, soon dragged her, rudely dragged her, from your richly adorned and easy bed, and oh dreadful to tell! laid her in the place of skulls. There she lies a feast for reptiles, while you from day to day and from night to night, bemoaning your lonely condition, wet your couch with tears. Have you not felt the truth of Doct. Young's aphorism, that "Good lost weighs more in pain, than gained in pleasure." When the woman you love has presented you with the lovely babe, which was your own image, your joys ran high; a recovering wife, a thriving infant, family happiness, the dearest happiness on earth, was your portion, but anon, death, that canker worm of human joy, corrodes your bliss, and leaves you a prey to lamentation and woe. The lovely babe is gone, and with it half the happiness you possessed on earth. Your partner shares your woes, and makes your grief more poignant still. Such trials as these, and especially when repeated, are apt to set the reflecting man to enquiry, whether or not there is a better portion than this world can

afford for poor suffering man, and in order that he may obtain a more lasting and substantial portion, than earth can give or take away, he is almost persuaded to be a christian.

5. The thoughts of death and judgment solemnly impress the human mind and almost persuade some to become christians. Perhaps the man enters the dying chamber of some despairing sinner, and witnesses his last agonies, his anguish and despair. While he looks on, he is overwhelmed with horror, and lest his latter end should be so insupportably shocking, he thinks very seriously, of seeking his God and making his peace.— Thus is he almost persuaded to be a christian by the last end of some ungodly sinner. Or it may be, the scene is quite the reverse but the effect the same. Peradventure he is called to witness the death of some humble believer, and while he witnesses his faith and humble patience, he is charmed with it, and saith like Balaam "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end by like his." O humble, faithful christian, by thy desirable, thine enviable death, almost thou persuadest me to be a christian.

6. The holy, useful and unblameable life of some christian acquaintances, almost persuades him to be a christian. Whilst he views the uprightness, the unblameableness of their conduct and conversation, he is convinced, they must be under the influence of principles of action very different from those which actuate himself and men of his description. Thus is he almost persuaded to be a christian.

II. I am to show what it is that prevents those, who are thus almost persuaded to be christians, from that decided determination on the part of christianity, which is their indispensible duty.

1. Then, I presume the great reason of all, and which lies at the root of every other that shall be named, is their native enmity of heart against God, and their guilty attachment to vice. That sinners are possessed of such an enmity as that I mention, I presume admits of no debate. See to this point Rom. viii, 7, "For the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." Now, sirs, this being the case, notwithstanding the sinner is convinced that religion is necessary, and that the christian religion is the best ever proposed to the acceptance of man, yet is he only almost persuaded, not altogether. His judgment may be highly illuminated while the heart is most dreadfully depraved.

2. I suppose another very cogent reason why many who are almost persuaded to be christians, do not become altogether so, is their love of sinful pleasures. To the courses christianity condemns they are warmly devoted and will not let them go, though almost persuaded. These courses which they will not let go are various, with various people; some will not let their impurity go; some will not let their cups of intoxication go; some will not let their guilty pastimes go; their gambling, racing, frolicking, &c. Some will not let go their acrimonious and evil speaking. Therefore, after all, they are only almost persuaded, for

if they were persuaded altogether, and heartily, they would let all go for Jesus' sake.

3. Another reason why many almost persuaded are not altogether so, is their unwillingness to submit to the positive duties christianity enjoins. With the evidence of christianity they are satisfied; of its reasonableness they approve; with its rewards they are enamoured; with its prohibitions they are willing to put up; but to its positive injunctions, they are not willing to submit, and thus it is, they are only almost persuaded. They cannot think of bowing their knees to God in prayer. They cannot submit to the self-denial required by the gospel, neither are they willing to eat bread and drink wine in the name of the blessed Redeemer, and in commemoration of his love.

4. Another thing that operates against their becoming christians, as themselves inform us, is, the ungodly and irregular life and conduct of many who profess religion. They say they know professors of religion, who do not appear meliorated by their profession. They will indulge in things highly improper, as fast as other men. They are angry, censorious, haughty and impure; and even unjust and intemperate too. Now, they say, they do not see the use of a religion which does not render those who profess it better men; therefore, they are only almost persuaded. They do not come to a thorough determination on the side of Christ and religion. Now, sirs, so far as the allegations here suggested against the professors of religion are true, it is conceded at once, that the profession such make will be of no benefit

to them; it is also granted that the representations here given are sometimes found to be fact. But no man of candour will presume to say, this is generally, much less always, the case. It must be admitted by the candid on all hands that there are many christians who act consistently with their holy profession, and afford the most satisfactory evidence that they are the best of men, and do the most good in society. And it is to be well recollected, that we are not attempting in this discourse, nor any other, to persuade our fellow men to be empty, inconsistent professors of religion; but to be christians indeed, which we are entirely confident will make them better men. But now permit me to ask careless and unguarded professors of religon, what account will you be able to give of your inconsistent conduct? Have you, by your careless and inconsistent behaviour, thrown a barrier in the way of other people embracing the gospel? What good account can you give of this matter to your God? Consider this I beseech you, ye careless professors before it is too late. I now proceed to conclude my discourse by urging a few persuasives on these hesitating people to induce them to become altogether christians, sincere and genuine christians.

1. The first great motive on which I urge you to become christians, is the express and unequivocal commandment of your God. If the Deity made you, and preserves you every moment of your existence, then I presume it is one of the very plainest deductions of reason, that you are under the most cogent obligations to obey him. The

process of fair reasoning on the subject is this. To the being that gave us existence, and continues that existence, we are under the strongest obligations. But God gave us existence and continues that existence; therefore, to God we are under strongest obligations. This conclusion is fair and undeniable. Again, what God, our maker and preserver commands us to do, we ought to do; but God commands us to believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ. "For this is his commandment that we believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ;" 1st Epistle of John, iii, 20.—Therefore we ought to believe. But to believe is to be a christian.

2. We ought to be christians, because thereby we shall most glorify God, which appears to have been the great end of our creation. God's glory is the greatest object in the universe, and the ultimate object of his own pursuit. "The Lord hath made all things for himself;" Prov. xvi, 4. And it ought to be the great object of our pursuit too. But, sirs, how are we most effectually to promote this greatest of all objects? I answer by being christians and performing faithfully all the duties incumbent on us as such. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me;" Psalm, L, 20. "Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples; John xv, 8. The process of fair reasoning here, is in sum simply this; we ought to be and to do what will most glorify God; but to be christians, and do our duty as such, will most glorify God, therefore we ought to be christians, and as such discharge our duty.

3. Another reason why we ought to be christians is, that thereby we will best promote our own interest and happiness here and hereafter.—The process of fair and conclusive reasoning here is this. Whatever will promote our own best interests, and is not contrary to divine commandment, we ought to pursue; but to be true christians and discharge all the duties of religion, will promote our interest, and are not contrary to divine commandment; therefore, we ought to be true christians and discharge all the duties of religion. Now, sirs, if the premises here are true, this conclusion is just as certain as the mathematical axiom that the whole is greater than a part. But, sirs, we think our premises are incontrovertible. What rational creature can doubt for a moment whether we ought to pursue what will promote our happiness, when such pursuit does not contradict the will of God? Does not the very nature the Creator has given us show this plainly enough? Otherwise why should he have implanted in us so strong a regard to our own felicity?—This regard is imperative and violent, consequently when exercised in due subordination to the will of God, it is right. That the will of God is always to be taken plainly into view, we not only admit but plead for.

That true christian principle, and strictly religious practice, contribute largely to human happiness here, and hereafter, is a proposition which admits of easy and plenary proof. What contributes more to happiness and real enjoyment, than peace of conscience and a contented mind? Do

we not all feel that this is the fact? Who can be happy while his conscience is remonstrating continually against his conduct and maintaining tumult and disorder in his bosom? Not one. Peace of mind, and tranquillity of soul are indispensable to happiness. Let us hear St. Paul on this subject; Gal. vi, 4, "Let every man prove his own work, then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." This inward peace and quiet cannot be dispensed with in the sacred article of happiness. These sentiments accord well with scripture representations. Psalm cxix, 165, "Great peace have they that love thy law and nothing shall offend them." John xiv, 27, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Again, sirs, is there any thing that contributes more to human happiness, than keeping the passions in due subordination? See the man who indulges in paroxisms of outrage and ill temper; how unhappy, how wretched do his passions and outrage render him; while the man of true religion and self government is tranquil and serene; and of consequence happy. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls;" Prov. xxv, 28. To undertake to prove by elaborate arguments, that to be christians, and discharge the great duties of religion is not contrary to the law of God, and that therefore we may seek our happiness in this way, would be to insult common sense, and will not be attempted. We urge it on you therefore, to become altogether christian, as the very best means of promoting your own happiness, as well

as the glory of God, which ought to be to rational creatures the two greatest objects in the universe.

4. I beseech you to become not only almost but altogether christians, from the necessary and glorious supports of religion when you come to die. Brethren, we all know it is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment. And O! how glorious a thing to feel the consolations of religion in that eventful hour. O! my poor unconverted friends, who are yet in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity, how can you think of meeting this last enemy without an interest in a Saviour's love? Can you think of lying down in everlasting burnings, and dwelling with devouring flames? How horrible the death of an unregenerate despairing sinner! And in order that you may avoid it, you must embrace the blessed Saviour and become sincere christians. There is no other way to escape the vengeance of the Lord, due to sin. Acts iv, 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given under Heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved." But my dear friends, is it not one of the greatest desideratums in the world to die the death of a sincere christian? "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace;" Psalm xxxvii, 37. O my dear unconverted friends, have you no desire to die the death of the righteous, and that your last end might be like his? With what a dignified composure have we seen the humble believer approach that bourne from whence no traveller returns? With what dignity and triumph have we seen him take his

leave of every earthly joy, at the call of his God, that he might enter on celestial felicity. O my dear friends, have you no desire to do likewise? By all the bliss and advantages of such a death I beseech you to become christians.

5. By the extatic bliss at God's right hand, and all the joys of celestial glory, I entreat you to become christians. Is there a world of everlasting bliss reserved for those who love and serve the Lord? And can you think of missing this celestial prize? Must you not in that event be a most incalculable loser. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" If there be a world of everlasting rest, where the highest happiness shall be enjoyed forever; is it not a most intolerable idea to think of being excluded from that celestial blessedness? By this consideration I beseech you to become christians, as this is the only way in which you can be admitted to the joys of Heaven. Are we not acting the most cruel part to our own precious souls, while we run the risque of losing this celestial bliss, for the sake of the shortlived, and paltry pleasures of sin? This Heaven of bliss and celestial delight is abundantly and plainly taught us in the sacred word; and have we the least ground from illuminated reason to call the truth of this sacred teaching into question? Is God not capable of making us happy forever? Will it not well comport with the benevolence of his nature to do so? Must he not delight in happiness? Can we reasonably suppose God would create rational

creatures of our intense sensibilities, and place us in this world, to conflict with misery, and pain, and woe, our three score years and ten, and then lie down in eternal oblivion? Does not such a conclusion cast a shade on the character of Deity? And can any man on this ground justify the ways of God to man? Whoever can, the speaker acknowledges most candidly he cannot. The scripture doctrine of a Heaven of everlasting happiness, where the virtuous shall enjoy their God, is necessary to the satisfaction of his mind in reflecting on the divine government, and without taking this into question, he can find no ground on which he can repose. And as this is the only thing that can render him satisfied, when reflecting on the awful and interesting subject of the divine administration, he ardently and tenderly recommends the same to his dear fellow-men; and on this ground would persuade them to be not almost, but altogether christians, that they may repose in eternal and uninterrupted bliss, when all the shifting scenes of this fleeting and tumultuous world have passed away. Which may the good Lord grant to be the final portion of all his friends, and enemies too if any he have. AMEN.

SERMON III.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

First Epistle of John, I, 3.

"*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also might have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ.*"

THE happiness of mankind in this world, depends very much on the freedoms and sweets of society. Yea, sirs, so very much is this the case, that without it, even life itself would not be a desideratum. Who in this assembly would wish to live forty years, on the condition that he should be banished to a solitary isle, where he must never see the countenance of his fellow man again, nor be enchanted with the sweet music of the human voice? I presume not one. If the passion of mankind for society be not strictly and absolutely universal, it is at all events very general, and has pervaded all ranks and degrees of human kind, from the king on the throne to the servant in the mill. This general principle of our nature is no less operative on the servant than his master; on the maid than her mistress; on the subject than his king. True it is, all mankind

do not affect the same kind of society; and that they do not, proceeds from the great diversity of their tastes; but they generally affect some kind of society. The wise and good affect the company of the wise and good, like themselves; the gay and trifling, affect that of the gay and trifling; and the licentious and profane, that of the licentious and profane. The most exalted fellowship and communion the mind of man has ever experienced, is that which exists between a man of fervent piety and his God. Next to this is that, which exists between the saints, the people of the most high God. When I say this, I mean true and sincere believers, possessed of genuine christian principles, and affection; and not mere nominal christians & speculative believers. For it is certain that whatever semblances there may be of communion in the externals of religion betwixt a real saint, and a mere professor only, who is destitute of all holy affection, there is no real spiritual union of soul, such as exists between those who are all sincerely pious. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" 2 Cor. xiv, 15. Now, sirs, it is this fellowship which exists between one good man and another, and between every pious man and his God, which the apostle speaks of in my text. "That ye might have fellowship with us," &c. What we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, &c. What we have known on the great subjects of religion;

what has been matter of our experience, we declare unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and participate our blessings." It is to be recollected here, that this John was one of our Lord's disciples, who waited on him in person, who was an eye witness of his extraordinary and miraculous operations, and who heard his divine discourses. These things which he had thus heard, and seen, he proposes to declare unto others, for their conviction and illumination, that they might be brought to embrace the Saviour as he had done. This was the method St. John took to bring those to whom he wrote, to the knowledge and belief of the truth. This is a method to be pursued by ministers of the gospel still for the same laudable purpose. They will do well to tell the world, what they themselves, if true ministers of Jesus, have seen and heard, that they may be brought to have fellowship with the father, and with his son Jesus Christ. True it is, none amongst us have seen and heard in the same sense, this sacred writer did, with the bodily eye and ear. But, notwithstanding this, there is an important and interesting sense, in which every true minister of Jesus Christ, and likewise every sincere christian has seen and heard the blessed Saviour, by an experience of divine grace on their hearts. And woe betide that man, whatever be the depth of his erudition, who undertakes to be the guide of souls to Heaven, and who has no experience of divine grace on his own heart. "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch;" Mat. xv, 14. I view it as a

daring and presumptuous thing, for a man who has no religion to take upon him the office of the christian ministry. I am no foe to learning; but an ardent friend, as is well known, I presume. And I think it highly necessary and beneficial for the christian minister, as it all tends to enlarge and liberalise the mind; but I do not think all the learning in the world a sufficient substitute for the grace of God, in a gospel preacher. This grace I should always insist upon, as a *sine qua non*, in this holy concern.

What I have in view on the present occasion, is;

I. To show you what they who are real christians have seen and heard, that you may be brought to their fellowship.

II. Speak a little of that fellowship which exists among christians and which they have with the father and with his son Jesus Christ.

Here I suppose I need scarcely inform you that the believer himself only sees and hears Christ in a spiritual sense, and that the Saviour is not even to him the object of corporeal vision.

1. One thing the believer has seen and heard, and of which he has been made deeply sensible, is, that he is condemned by the divine law, as a sinner and a rebel against his God; that he has broken the precept of that sacred law, and stands justly exposed to its penalty; that it would be strictly just in Almighty God, to send him to hell; that it is a matter of mere mercy, that this has not been his portion long ago. He sees that should God be strict to mark his iniquities against him he could not answer for one of the thousands, with

which he is chargeable. This is wont to produce a high degree of alarm, because he feels that hell is his desert, and should he die in his present situation he could not escape, and what greatly increases his alarm is, that he sees and hears, in the

2. Place that salvation is not to be by the law; Rom. iii, 20; that he is unable to comply with its holy requisitions; that he breaks it daily in thought, word and deed; that his future obedience will make no amends for his past sins—consequently, that could he even amend his life and manners, he would still be liable to condemnation. This increases his alarm. All these things he sees and hears in a way entirely different from the careless sinner.

3. He has seen and heard, and most dreadfully felt, that in himself there is no help; that as he cannot obey the law of God to perfection, so neither is there any other way in which he can save himself. He has seen that he lies entirely at the divine mercy, and if God in his infinite compassion save him not, he must eternally perish.

4. He sees and hears, or rather feels, that he is a poor, miserable wretch, without the grace and favour of God; that the world and all its enjoyments are incapable of making him happy without the enjoyment of God; that nothing but the divine favour can do this. He sees how futile and vain it is to rely on the world and its empty pomps and vanities for happiness, while he has such a dreadful self-tormentor, in his own bosom, which he carries about with him wherever he goes. Till he finds salvation in Christ he feels himself

wretched, in all places and in all circumstances.

5. The true believer has seen and heard that in Christ there is grace and salvation for guilty men, and that this grace can extend to the vilest sinners on earth; that he has made such an atonement as renders the Deity propitious to guilty men, and secures Heaven and eternal happiness to every believing soul; and that, too, in perfect consistency with the perfections of the Deity, and the dignity of his government. O what extacy and joy the hitherto poor benighted soul now feels, when brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! How changed his condition, his feelings, his views! since God the Son has made him free. Not that I think the feelings of all genuine converts precisely the same. God may, and no doubt does, bestow on some, more comfort and joy on closing with Christ, than others. But all who sincerely commit their souls into the hands of the Divine Redeemer, and feel satisfied that they have done so, are used to feel some degree of sacred joy and comfort.

6. He has seen that he has not power even to come to this offered Saviour, without the divine drawings; John vi, 44, "No man can come to me except the father, who has sent me, draw him;" that God's grace is necessary even for this;—that his salvation in every part is of grace. Not that I think any illuminated, well informed christian feels himself under the influence of any such inability as will excuse him from guilt; he feels rather that the more unable he is in scripture sense, to serve God, just so much the more guilty he is;

as his inability consists exclusively in the opposition of his heart to his duty. This inability cannot be natural, which is a complete excuse; for the natural capacity is the proper measure of our duty, as we are required to love God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind, and no more. If I am required to love God, with all my heart, soul, strength and mind, I feel that the requisition is perfectly reasonable, and that I deserve the divine displeasure for my failure; but were I required to love God with all the soul, strength and mind, of Isaac Newton, or Benjamin Franklin, I should feel no guilt in non-compliance. But this is a requisition which the great God can never make, and I only put the case for elucidation's sake.—And well do I think it answers, or ought to answer, the end. Now, sirs, I will not assert that every pious christian has correct views in theory on this subject; nay, I verily believe that many have not; but I presume, every sincere christian is rightly exercised in heart; feeling that by how much the more he is unable to serve God, by just so much the more he is guilty; and that it would be infinitely just in God to send him to hell. I am not yet prepared to say that he is perfectly willing to go there. If I might, without being chargeable with ostentation, quote my own individual experience on this subject, I might say with much truth, that I have felt, times out of number, that it would be infinitely just in God to send me to hell, but am not able to say, that I am willing to go to that doleful place, and should I say so, I know I should belie my conscience,

and I think I should offend my God. It is said I ought in duty, to submit to all the will of God. This sentiment I heartily subscribe. Absolute and unconditional submission to God's will, I have been trying to preach for upwards of thirty years; and God being my gracious helper, I design to continue preaching thus, while I have strength to say "Thy will be done." I trust God knows this is the theme of my heart. My dear Almighty God, may I not humbly appeal to thee, who art perfectly acquainted with every desire, that one of the warmest wishes my heart knows or ever knew, is, that thy will, in every possible case, may be my will. And O, thou indulgent Lord God of love, if it be my duty to be willing to go to eternal torment, for thy glory, is it not soon enough for me to discharge this fearful, this tremendous duty, when thou hast let me know it is thy will? This, glory be forever ascribed to thine adored name, thou hast not yet done. And blessed God, would it not be quite a premature discharge of duty for me to be exercising my willingness to hail that world of darkness before I know I must go there? And O! how does it rejoice my heart, amidst all the useless talk I have heard on this doleful subject, that thou hast informed me, not only on thy holy and never failing word, but on thy sacred oath, that it is not thy will; but on the contrary, that I go to Heaven and enjoy thee forever. Ezekiel, xxxiii, 11, "As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye

die, O house of Israel." II. Peter, iii, 9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance."

7. The true christian has seen that there is a divine propriety in religion; and that sin is in itself altogether unfit and improper and that holiness is infinitely fit, proper and lovely. To the good man, under the influence of a new heart, honesty, chastity, sobriety, and temperance appear so many amiable, lovely and desirable things, which ought to be practised for their own sakes, that their influence in society would be extremely beneficial; that things, the contraries of these, are improper, degrading, and injurious, and ought to be most carefully shunned by every orderly and good man.

8. He has seen and sweetly felt, that there is more real heart-felt satisfaction in religion, than in all the pleasures of sin. That he was extremely mistaken when in the days of his ignorance and unbelief he imagined, that religion was unfavourable to human happiness. He now sees and experiences that religion is the greatest thing in the world to promote human happiness.

II. I am to speak a little of that fellowship which exists amongst the saints; and which they have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

By fellowship in the general is meant, the company and enjoyment of one another; participating in the same pleasures, joys and comforts; and

even sharing with one another, the sorrows, calamities, and distresses of life.

By the fellowship of the saints is meant, their sharing and partaking of the same divine joys, comforts, and blessings, rejoicing with one another in prosperity, sympathising with each other in adversity, bearing one another's burdens, and thus fulfilling the law of Christ; Gal. ii, 14.

Then, when the Apostle says, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us;" he means that they might enjoy the same blessings, which christians enjoyed; that they might feel the same comforts he felt, that they might partake with him in his joys, and he with them in theirs'; that they might sympathise with him in his sorrows, and he with them in theirs'. This necessarily leads me to enquire what are the joys and comforts of the righteous, in which they rejoice with each other, and what those sorrows and sufferings are, which are the subjects of their mutual condolence. One subject of comfort and rejoicing is the pardon of sin. How great a source of joy is this? What a delightful theme! When a sincere and humble christian has long felt anxiety for a beloved friend, and earnestly wished his salvation, hears at length from his own mouth that he has embraced the christian religion, how does he rejoice with him? How do they join in rendering praise to God for his mercy and loving kindness? How ardent their mutual joy? How the odour of their prayer and praise ascends to the throne of God, accepted through the atoning blood of Jesus their common Saviour?

2. That they are entitled to everlasting happiness in the celestial world is another great source of joy to the people of God. That they shall together bow before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple forever, often gladdens their hearts as they progress in their journey through the wilderness of this world to Canaan's happy land. Let none tell me this is too interested to make a prospect of future and eternal bliss, so much the source of joy to christians. Let the self complacent friends of favorite systems say what they will, I shall always feel myself on safe and tenable ground, when I am so decidedly with my divine and blessed Master as I am here; Luke, x, 20, "Notwithstanding, in this, rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, that your names are written in Heaven." So addressed the blessed Jesus his disciples, when they returned from their first religious campaign, not a little elated, and crying out, "Lord the devils are subject to us through thy name;" Luke, x, 17.

3. Another very consolatory reflection to the people of the Lord, and a high source of their joy is that pleasing reflection, "That all things shall work together for their good;" Rom. viii, 28. This is a high source of consolation when troubles press. God's people, while in this world, are liable to a thousand vexations and inquietudes, resulting from various and numerous things; and they greatly need some source of support and consolation under the same. Such is the reflection that all things which befal them in the Providence

of God, shall work for their final welfare and advantage; so that the dispensations of the Almighty, however adverse, tend to promote their peace and happiness.

4. Another source of joy and comfort to believers, is, the flourishing of religion, and christians walking in the truth. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth;" III. John, 4. The flourishing of God's cause is pleasing, quickening and encouraging to the saints; yea, it is like life from the dead to their souls.—How anxious are all true saints, for revivals of religion? How do they make the prayer of Habakkuk their own; "Revive thy work O Lord, in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy;" Heb. iii, 2. I can have no idea of a true christian, who does not sincerely desire a revival of true and genuine religion. And I presume when he hears of it, though it should even be amongst the isles of the southern sea, amongst a people whom he never saw, nor ever will, till he sees them in the general judgment, it is a source of joy and rejoicing to his benevolent and disinterested soul.

5. I presume the company and fellowship of each other is a source of rejoicing to genuine christians.

It remains for us now to take a little notice of the sources of their sorrows and distresses.—Notwithstanding christians experience many evils which are quite common to them and other men; yet none will be the subject of remark at present but such as are peculiar to them as christians.

1. One source of their peculiar sorrows is, the remainder of sin and corruption, in their own hearts. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. vii, 24. The true believer, not being perfectly sanctified, feels and bitterly laments the remainder of sin within him. And when he makes his feelings on this subject known to his fellow christians, how do they sympathise with him? And more, how do they hold up his case at the throne of divine mercy, imploring victory for him, through the atoning merit of Jesus Christ? And in their generous sympathy, and their mutual prayers, and intercessions, consisted greatly their fellowship.

2. The withdrawment of divine consolations from their souls, or what an old Scotch divine would call the hidings of God's face; "O the hope of Israel and Saviour thereof, in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?" Every true christian has been favored with some access to God, and has enjoyed something of what may be called the light of the divine countenance; and when he is not favoured with such access to a throne of grace, as he has heretofore enjoyed, he feels it as a great source of sorrow.

3. Another source of sorrow to the true believer is, the general prevalence of vice; "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician

there? Why then is not the hurt of the daughter of my people healed?" Jeremiah, viii, 21, 22. "O that my head were waters! and my eyes a fountain of tears! that I might weep day and night, for the slain of the daughters of my people;" Jer. ix, 1. This prevalence of vice is another great source of the christian's sorrow.

It only remains now to say, on this part of the subject, what is that fellowship which the christian has with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. This, sirs, is a matter better conceived of by the pious mind that feels it, than expressed by any body. However, as we use no words without affixing to them some ideas, we shall say something about that fellowship which exists between the true believer and the Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ. This fellowship consists in the soul's enjoying God's light, love and grace. It is a fellowship truly and strictly spiritual. When divine light is let into the mind by the holy ghost, and divine things are rendered clear, plain and impressive, I think that soul has fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. When God's love is shed abroad on the believer's heart, and he is made to feel quite sensible returns of love to his God, then I think there is communion with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ; when the graces of the divine spirit are in lively exercise, then I think there is communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ; when the soul is humbled on account of sin and filled with affectionate and adoring thoughts of God.

1. From this subject I infer that christians differ greatly from the men of the world in their views. Do they see and hear things as here represented? How far are the men of the world from this? O! how hath the "God of this world blinded their eyes;" 2 Cor. iv, 4. They discover not the true deformity of sin, nor the beauty of holiness; "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." And nothing less than a renovation of heart can discover them to him clearly; the defect in his vision being moral, not natural.

2. Learn that true christians are the happiest of mankind. Their enjoyments are the most sublime and exalted. Their communion and fellowship the most endeared in the world. When men of the world vilify and abuse religion and represent it as unfavorable to human happiness, they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm; they have tried only one side of the question, and consequently are not competent judges. Those who are real christians have greatly the advantage of them with respect to judging in this case, having tried both sides; and their testimony is decidedly in favour of christians. AMEN.

SERMON IV.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORY

Gal. VI, 14.

"God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I unto the world."

THE most of mankind have something in which they glory, something of which they make their boast; and that according to their particular situation, turn of mind, or condition of life. Some men glory in their wealth, some in their honour, some in their family and descent, some in their beauty, some in their learning, and some in their religious profession. And indeed, St. Paul informs us of some, who even gloried in their shame.—Phil. iii, 19, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame." St. Paul himself had a very different subject of glorifying the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

The connection of my text is as follows: In the 9th verse the Apostle insists on a continuance in well doing, on perseverance in a course of

virtuous action; and enforces the exhortation by the consideration of its happy consequences—"And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." In verse 10, he enjoins on them the most diffusive benevolence in the compass of their power.—"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith." In verse 11 he turns their attention to his great regard for themselves, evinced plainly by so lengthy a letter written with his own hand. "You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand." Saint Paul, it is to be recollected, being a native Hebrew, and the Greek language not his vernacular tongue, did not generally write his letters to the churches, but employed an amanuensis, to whom he dictated. This letter, however, he wrote as himself declares, with his own hand; and this he holds up to view as a strong proof of his high regard for his Galatian friends. He then informed them that as many as desired to make a fair show in the flesh, to strengthen their party, to please mankind, and get a name, constrained them to be circumcised that they might avoid persecution; "as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; verse 12. In verse 13, he assures those Galatians that those people, who themselves were circumcised, did not keep the law better than other people; but desired to have them circumcised that they might boast of them as belonging to their party, and

thus glory in their flesh. In this connection the Apostle saith "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." I presume, sirs, every true christian can make this language, in some degree, his own.

Glorying in the cross of Christ is figurative language, and simply means that he would glory in that benevolent Redeemer, and in him alone, who died on the cross to effect the salvation of poor lost sinners. I propose to show;

I. What are the great things effected by the cross of Christ, on account of which not only the Apostle of the Gentiles, but all christians ought to glory therein.

II. In what respects the true believer and the world are crucified to each other, and then conclude with some inferences and an application.

I. I am to show what are the great things accomplished by the cross of Christ, on account of which, not only the Apostle, but with him, all christians ought to glory therein. Here be it recollected, when we use this figurative language of the Apostle, we shall affix his ideas to it, that is, the cross for him who died on it, or the atonement Jesus made.

1. I presume one great thing accomplished by the cross of Christ, on account of which all christians, not only may, but ought, to glory in it, is, that thereby the glory of God is signally promoted. That the cross of Christ or the atonement made by him who died thereon, does eminently glorify God, is the plain doctrine of his holy word;

"Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from Heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again;" John xii, 28. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do;" John xvii, 4. "Glory to God in the highest, and on the earth peace, good will toward men;" Luke ii, 14. I presume all men ought to be highly pleased with the advancement of the divine glory, and ought therein to glory, and make their boast; as God's glory is the greatest object in the universe and the ultimate object of his own pursuit. That God's glory is the ultimate object of his pursuit, see Prov. xvi, 4, which I presume is full in point, "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Is it asked how the cross of Christ accomplishes the divine glory? I answer, by illustrating the divine perfections to the greatest possible advantage. It is here that "Mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" Psalm, lxxxv, 10. Neither can we conceive of any other plan on which the adorable Deity might have proceeded with mankind on which he would have been so much glorified, and his perfections so illustriously displayed. Had he doomed all mankind to eternal destruction, justice might have been glorified; but mercy, in that event, must have been forever dormant. Had the Deity saved all without Christ and his cross, mercy might triumph but justice must have bled at every pore. But in the cross of Christ, mercy and truth are both illustriously displayed. That

mercy triumphs all plainly see. That justice conspicuously shines in the cross of Christ, is plain from the following considerations. When Jesus Christ had taken the low place of the sinner, and agonising in Gethsemane, at the apprehension of the divine wrath, he exclaimed, "Father if it be possible let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt;" Mat. xxvi, 39. But, sirs, such was God's strict regard to justice and the dignity of his government, that when his own immaculate and beloved son undertook to atone for human guilt, and suffer in the sinner's place, he would not cause the cup to pass away, but the Saviour drank it to the very dregs. Does not this display the Deity's regard to justice just as clearly as the punishment of the offender in eternal torment would have done. But if this be the fact, then God is most signally glorified by the cross of Christ. Well, then, does the Apostle and with him every genuine christian glory in the cross of Christ, "God forbid that I should glory," &c.

2. Another great thing achieved by the cross of Christ is, that God's law is thereby magnified and made honourable, and that both in its precept and penalty. For when we use this figurative language of the cross of Christ, we include as the scriptures evidently do, all he did as well as all he suffered. He obeyed the precept of the law, even to absolute perfection, and sustained the penalty to the uttermost mite, and herein is God's law more honoured and its true worth better estimated than it would have been in the

condemnation of all sinners to all eternity. In this latter case the preceptive demands of the law never would have been complied with at all.—And Christ's sufferings better express God's regard to his law than the sufferings of all mankind would have done, because of his infinite dignity. The true christian will certainly glory in the honour of God's law, and consequently in the cross, as the restorer of the same.

3. By the cross of Christ and by that alone, the channels of mercy are opened to man and their everlasting salvation and happiness rendered consistent with the glorious perfections of the eternal God; John, iii, 14, 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." This shows that the cross would be efficacious to draw men to God; Acts, xiii, 38, 39, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all who believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." This passage, as well as a variety of others, go clearly to the same point.

Is it asked by any why the cross of Christ was necessary to open the channels of mercy to men—Because, for reasons already shown, God would not extend mercy without the cross. Do any ask why mankind could not be saved without mercy? I answer, because they had all sinned; Rom. iii, 12—18, "They are all gone out of the

way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one, their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." Being thus in a state of total corruption and helplessness, they could not be saved by the law; Rom. iii, 20, "Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin;" Gal. iii, 10, 11, "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which is written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law, in the sight of God it is evident; for the just shall live by faith." Is it asked how Christ opens the channels of mercy to man; I answer, by removing the obstacles, whatever they were, which obstructed its egress. Well, then, may St. Paul, and with him all evangelical christians, glory in the cross of the blessed Jesus, who thus by his sufferings and death, hath removed the obstacles which obstructed the sinners acceptance with God. The cross of the blessed Jesus is commensurate to all the sinners wants and necessities. It procures the descent of the holy spirit; John xvi, 7—11, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the comforter will not come, but if I go

away I will send him unto you. And when he is come he will convince the world of sin, of righteousnesss and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness because I go the farther and ye see me no more; of judgment because the prince of this world is judged." The believer is reclaimed by the cross if at any time he wanders out of the way; 1st Epistle of John, ii, 1, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ, the righteous." The cross quicken to repentance and faith; Zachariah, xii, 10, "And I will pour out upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace, and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness for him as one in bitterness for a first born." It insures the believer's perseverance in a state of grace; John, xiv, 19, "Because I live you shall live also." Well then may christians determine to glory in nothing, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to them and they unto the world.

II. I am to show in what respects the believer and the world are crucified to each other, that is, in what respects the world and the believer are dead to each other; for crucifixion is certain death.

1. Then, the believer is crucified to his once vain, and delusive expectations of high and substantial happiness from the world. For this he once passed as you are doing now, poor sinner; but the

cross of Christ, his blessed Lord has taught him better. Since he has become acquainted with the blessed Jesus savingly, he has lost these vain expectations. He finds that he who suffered on the cross for lost and ruined sinners did not indulge them; he finds they are not favourable to warm attachment to the cross; James, iv, 4, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God. He finds from sacred record, that if he be crucified with Christ, "and risen with him from the dead, he is required to seek those things that are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God;" Col. iii, 1.

2. The true believer is crucified and dead to the excessive love of the world. Once this guilty passion reigned predominant in his breast; but since he hath fixed the eye of faith on Christ the crucified Saviour, he has felt it giving up the ghost; and he is now determined to comply with the Apostle's direction; I. John, ii, 15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him." The believer has discovered very clearly, that there is much truth and propriety in that declaration of our blessed Lord, that "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" Mat. vi, 24.

3. The true believer is crucified to the false and ungodly maxims of the world. These maxims

are extremely licentious; "The men of the world call evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter;" Isaiah, v, 20.

How do they call evil good, and good evil? The gratification of their fleshly appetites, and carnal desires they call good. With respect to indulgence they make not the law of God their rule at all. In a thousand instances they consult nothing farther than their own inclinations, and base desires. What else does the vile seducer consult? Does he not give way to his impure and licentious inclinations, till he has perpetrated the basest act, one that goes to produce eventually evil in society, to a degree almost inconceivable; one that strikes at the very root of human bliss, and relaxes the ligaments that bind society together in social happiness? This wicked man certainly does not consult the blessed word of the Lord, for that expressly forbids him to commit adultery; Exodus, xx, 14. He certainly cannot be regulated by any suitable regard to the feelings of his fellow men, or he never could prevail on himself to produce such a sum of wretchedness and misery to an honourable and respectable family, for the gratification of a momentary passion. See that decent and reputable family, living in peace and quietness and social bliss; how is the happiness of the fond parents bound up in the opening charms of that lovely blooming daughter, not yet emerged from her teens. See the vile seducer enter, and become familiar in this happy and unsuspecting family. But O, my God! who can describe the

sensations of these fond and tender parents, when it appears two plainly to be denied, that their beauteous daughter is ruined forever in this world, and the family degraded? How are the feelings of this family put to the rack? Here is a specimen of the dire consequences of licentious and wicked maxims. This is what has too often resulted from calling evil good. What, says the licentious seducer, has not God given us the passions we possess? And for what purpose if they are not to be indulged? To this question I answer seriously, and I hope rationally—the passions we possess, the creative God hath given and for the most exalted purposes; and those passions indulged according to the divine law, and no farther, incur no blame; and permit me to ask in turn, if the Deity hath not given us the noble faculty of reason to regulate our passions and keep them in due subordination? When will our system of jurisprudence become more just, rational, & equable than it is? If I understand the great design of our civil laws, that valuable design is to secure our civil rights and to promote human happiness. Let me now with becoming modesty, and all due deference to the wisdom of our legislators, ask them what they think of the apportionments of punishments in the instances I will now suggest? I believe if a man is convicted of a second crime in horse stealing or forging of a note, he must suffer an ignomenious death, but if he is guilty of seduction, the only punishment I have known inflicted was compelling him to support his illegitimate offspring. Permit me to ask, sapient sirs,

if these are just and righteous apportionments. A word to the wise is sufficient; this matter is submitted to your sober reflection. The wicked world puts darkness for light and light for darkness. Are not our infidels guilty of this to an extreme degree, when they use every exertion to extinguish the bright and blazing sun of divine revelation, and offer us in its stead, the glimmering and feeble taper of the light of nature for a guide to heavenly bliss. I would speak in the most respectful and decorous terms of all the lights God has given, and benefit by them so far as they go. Thus would I be exercised with respect to the light of nature. On certain subjects this light is great and shining; but on others it is silent as the mansions of the grave. When I enquire on the great and radical subject in theology, viz: the existence of a God, I think its lectures are loud and luminous. Is the following reasoning fair and logical.—I travel where I find no inhabitants; nay, I find myself at length five hundred miles from any inhabited country; but even there I find a number of large fine looking brick houses, furnished with spacious glass windows; I reason thus; no being with whom I have any acquaintance, or of whom I have any knowledge, men excepted, can build brick houses with glass windows; but here are houses with glass windows, therefore, men have been here. Now is not this conclusion fair and undeniable from the premises; and may I not rest well assured that men had been there? Apply this kind of reasoning to the existence of the Deity, and will it not

as fairly prove it as the brick buildings would prove the existence of men. No being could create a material universe, which clearly manifests intelligence, design, and almighty power, but a God; but a material universe of the above description exists and of which myself am a part, therefore a God exists. Then in proving the existence of the Deity the light of nature is all important and conclusive; but if the question be this, on what terms will the Deity be reconciled to a transgressor who has offended him by sin, and the light of nature is utterly silent? On this and many other important and interesting questions, it is the gospel alone that has brought life and immortality to light. Then, sirs, every attempt to lessen the credit of this glorious gospel or to shake and unsettle the faith of mankind in the same, is an attempt to put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Of this the christian is not guilty, he is crucified to this false maxim of an ungodly world.

3. The true believer is crucified to the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world, and the spirit of the gospel are diametrically opposite to each other, yea, as directly so as are fire and water, light and darkness. The spirit of the world is a spirit of pride; "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor;" Psalm x, 2; "For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, let them be taken in their pride;" Psalm lix, 12; "Pride and arrogancy do I hate;" Prov. viii, 13; "But if ye will not hear it my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride;" Jer. xiii, 17; "And those that walk in pride he is able to abase;"

Dan. iv, 37; "For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father but is of the world;" I. John, ii, 16. The spirit of the gospel is a spirit of humility, gentleness, and meekness; "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears;" Acts xx, 19. Now, sirs, here is the spirit with which St. Paul was actuated, and I hope all will readily admit that this great and good man served the Lord with the spirit of the gospel; "Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble;" I. Pet. v, 5. That the spirit of the gospel, the spirit by which every true christian is actuated, is a gentle spirit, the following passages, I presume, will clearly evince; "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;" I. Thes. ii, 7; "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men;" 2 Tim. ii, 24; "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men;" Titus iii, 2; "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle," &c. James iii, 17, "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way;" Psalm xxv, 9; "But the meek shall inherit the earth;" "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" Mat. v, 5. "Even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God, of great price;" I. Pet. iii, 4.

The spirit of the world is a spirit of envy; but the spirit of the gospel is a spirit that delights in the happiness and welfare of others. Envy is an evil disposition which consists in fretting and repining at the welfare and happiness of others. Such have we said is the spirit of the world. See to this point the following passages; Mat. xxvii, 18, "For he knew that for envy they had delivered him; Mark xv, 10, "For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy;" Acts vii, 9, "And the patriarchs, moved with envy sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with him."—This marks too plainly the spirit of the world; Acts xiii, 45, "But when the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul contradicting and blaspheming;" Acts xvii, 5, "But the Jews that believed not, moved with envy, took unto themselves certain lewd fellows of the baser sort," &c. Now the spirit of the gospel is love to all mankind, and a cordial rejoicing in the happiness of others; "Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep," Rom. xii, 15, are precepts which the true christian delights to obey. O how contrary to the envious spirit of the world; the happiness of his fellow men is happiness to the true christian believer.

The spirit of the world is a spirit of revenge. The spirit of the believer who is crucified to the world leaves vengeance in the hand of the Lord, committing himself to him who judgeth righteously. That the spirit of the world is a spirit of revenge, needs not a particle of scripture to substantiate

it. Every man of tolerable observation sees it acted out almost daily in society. This is the principle that leads to so many challenges to single combat. This is the base, the sanguinary principle which has robbed our nation of two of its brightest ornaments, as well as most useful men, Hamilton and Decatur; themselves strong as an host, and almost capable of a nation's defence. O thou wicked, disgraceful, imperious custom! must that gallant man who so gloriously chastised the Algerine pirates; for centuries the terror of Europe, and paid them their tribute in powder and ball, instead of silver and gold, fall a victim at last at thy ensanguined shrine? When, O my God, will the civilized and refined nations of both Europe and America, grow wise and courageous enough to put down forever this barbarous and gothic custom? I have often wondered and still wonder as much as ever, why I have never heard this vice receive a single reproof from the pulpit within my present recollection, except what I have given it myself? Is it because the clergy do not view it as criminal? This I cannot prevail upon myself to believe. Is it because the custom is so prevalent, and so much countenanced by men of high standing in society, that they despair of success, and therefore their attempts are palsied? Or is it because they are afraid of giving offence to a large and respectable class of society, whose displeasure they are not willing to meet? That the practice prevails too generally, and is countenanced by many gentlemen of high standing in society, is conceded at first blush; but may I be permitted

to ask my reverend fathers and brethren, with due modesty and deference, whether this be a good reason for sparing this gigantic sin? The sin of murder! deliberate, wilful, and aggravated murder! But if any of the reasons above stated be a good one for sparing this fell transgression of the divine law, why do they reprove profane swearing? Why do they reprove illicit sexual intercourse? Are not both these crimes much more general amongst men of the very first circle in society than duelling?

4. The believer is crucified to the ungodly customs and amusements of the world, and gives them up for the Lord Jesus' sake. Once he participated in them largely; but since he has been taught in the school of Christ, he has been taught that time is a little too precious to be wasted in such emphatical trifles. He has learned now, that theatres, plays, races, and dancing assemblies, are not the road heavenward; and ever since the cross of Christ has had a suitable effect on his mind, he has abandoned them forever, having nailed them to that precious cross.

5. The true believer is crucified to the men of the world, and they too are crucified to him; "By whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Once these men of the world were his choice companions, and many a loose and giddy hour has he spent in their company; but since he has become savingly acquainted with the cross he discovers they are not very friendly to it, and they are his choice companions no longer. He is still disposed to treat them with civility and

discretion, nor will he treat them in any other way; but they are the men of his counsel no longer.—Thus there is a kind of voluntary and reciprocal parting, and they affect each others company no more.

1. Learn that those who do not glory in the cross with the Apostle are not true christians.—The reasons for glorying in this are obviously great. Whoever glories in his morality, party or mere form, is utterly devoid of real and genuine religion. For those who are taught in Christ's school have something else to glory in, the precious cross.

2. Learn that they who glory in the cross only because they hope it will save them, will not be saved at all. This does not argue a renewed mind; any body may do this. But to glory in the cross, because thereby God's glory is promoted and his law honoured, argues a mind attached to God's honour, and cause, and that loves him for his own sake. No love that is merely selfish, or terminates on benefits received will ever prove that the person possessing such affection and no other, has any real religion. God must be loved supremely for his own glory and the excellence of his character, or there is no religion. Let none suppose I exclude the idea of loving God for benefits conferred; I insist on the necessity and propriety of loving him for his loving kindness to us. It is right to do so, and plainly countenanced in sacred writ; "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplication;" Psalm, cxvi, 1. But if we do not love him for his holy

nature and excellence of character, I very much question whether it can ever be proved that we have religion. Nay, I firmly believe it cannot. The very essence of all religion in Heaven and on earth, consists in loving God for the holiness and excellence of his character. Ah you say this is the Hopkinsian doctrine that has made so much disturbance in the American churches. Well, be it so, and if it be, Hopkins on this point is right; because it is the bible doctrine; and let all flesh know that its being the bible doctrine and the very feeling of my own heart since the first hour I felt real religion, is the reason why I embrace it; and it was as much my doctrine for several years before I knew there was such a man as Doctor Hopkins on earth. As it is now, I bless the Lord for it, that at the hour of my conversion I saw, or thought I saw, such an excellency in the divine character, that I should be disposed to love and admire it whatever might be my final fate. This was the feeling of a raw uninformed boy, who knew nothing about systems, and who knew not one system from another. And O my holy, holy Lord God! is it not now my feeling at the mature age of fifty-seven, when covered with hoary hairs, and having studied systems for thirty-three of the last years. And O my God, searcher of my heart! may I not appeal to thee, that what delights me more than to be master in theory, of any system or all systems that have existed from the crucifixion to the present hour, is to feel Christ formed in my heart through divine grace, the hope of glory; and to feel sensibly, and beyond a doubt, that I love thee

supremely for the consummate excellence of thy holy character; and also for thy undeserved communicated goodness, to my poor, needy, guilty, naked soul. And O my dear hearers, will you join, heartily join your pastor in this resolution, that while others are indulging in different parts of the world, in the bitterness of theological debate, our great and leading concern, and fervent importunate prayers shall be to feel the love of the Father and the Son shed abroad on our hearts; and manifest on all occasions, that meek and gentle, that holy and christian spirit, which will most honor God and best adorn the doctrines of our blessed Saviour. Am I asked whether the scriptures bear us out in the idea we insist upon, that God is to be supremely loved for his excellence of character; see the following passages, and judge for yourselves. Your preacher is no dogmatist, neither does he ever intend to be; he judges independently for himself of divine truth, he allows other men the same liberty; Psalm, viii, 1; "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." Now, sirs, compare this with the last verse of the preceding Psalm, and make up your opinions; Psalm, cxlviii, 15, "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent;" he hath set his glory above the Heavens. Now, let any logician say for what we are called upon here to praise the Lord, and will he not say "the excellence of his character;" Psalm, xcix, 5; "exalt ye the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; for he is holy." Now, sirs, what is assigned here as the reason why we should worship

God? Is it not his holiness? Is not the same, the great reason why we should love him? Let common sense answer. Are any ready to say these sentiments savour considerably of Hopkinsianism; for that I am not accountable; I have assured you already, they are not my sentiments because they were Doctor Hopkins'. They were my sentiments in the earliest stages of my religious experience, and I have not a doubt but they will be, till through divine grace, if ever, I arrive at that happy world of perfection, where I shall know as I am known. I hope, however, they savour strongly enough of Bibleism to approve themselves to every intelligent christian, and let every body know this is the only *ism* about which I am much concerned. If people choose to give me a nick name I must bear it, till they will be disposed to treat me with greater deference and civility, if they ever will. But I want none of their names, nor do I affect them nor feel myself honored by them. I shall preach just such doctrines and only such as I believe to be contained and plainly taught in God's word. Nor shall it be a question with me, whether Doctor Hopkins taught them or not. I do not acknowledge Doctor Hopkins as my teacher any more than I do Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Wetherspoon, Samuel Davis, or good old John Bunyan. I hope I have learned long since, from the only master I acknowledge, my dear Lord Jesus Christ, to call no man on earth master; Mat. xxiii, 9, 10; "And call no man your Father upon the earth; for one is your Father in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master even Christ.

But lest any should think I treat so valuable a divine as Dr. Hopkins lightly, I shall express with candour my opinion of his system of theology; I have read it carefully many years ago, and notwithstanding there are a few theological sentiments in this system, more especially one, if I understand the author, which I think I shall never embrace with the bible in my hand and a summary of its holy contents in my heart; yet I do sincerely think that system the best I have read considering it as a whole.

3. Finally, learn that those who are yet conformed to the spirit of the world, who are covetous, proud, censorious, selfish, envious, revengeful, and malevolent, are enemies to the cross of Christ in heart, whatever their pretences be, or wherever they may worship. Let such consider well that aphorism of our blessed Lord; Mat. vii. 21; "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven." And let all know that no system of religious opinions will transport a soul to Heaven without a holy and santified heart. AMEN.

SERMON V.

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, OR JUSTIFICATION BY THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

Jeremiah XXIII, 5, 6.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; and in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

THAT a promised Saviour was looked for and expected by the Jewish nation; and that this had long been the case, previous to the advent of Jesus Christ must be well known to every attentive reader of the sacred writings. That this expectation of the Jews was not a mere fancy, or matter of wild enthusiasm, but founded on the abundant promises of a gracious God, must be also well known. The writings of the Jewish prophets abound with promises and predictions of a Saviour who was to come. For the truth of this I may refer my hearers to these prophecies

at large; because to quote all the passages which would be pertinent here, would be to transcribe half the writings of these holy men. However, amongst the numerous passages of ancient prophecy, which relate to the Messiah and the state of the christian church under his gracious administration, none are more plain, direct, and unequivocal than that contained in my text; "Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper and he shall execute judgment and justice in the earth," &c. &c. &c. Surely this righteous branch raised unto David is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ; neither is there any other of whom it may be said, he is the Lord our righteousness.

The connection of my text is this. The Lord in our preceding context finds fault with the pastors of Israel for the way in which they watched over and fed his flock; or rather, for the way in which they neglected their duty; "Woe unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that scatter my people; ye have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not visited them, behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings saith the Lord;" verses 1, 2, of this chapter; "Behold the days come saith the Lord," &c. &c. These words refer to the Messiah and his blessed reign on earth; but more especially I presume to that blessed period when righteousness shall universally prevail, and the Jews, God's ancient

people be restored to their own land; nor will this prediction receive its entire completion until that desirable event is accomplished; "Therefore, behold the days come saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth which broupht up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them."

In prosecuting this subject I design to show;

I. In what sense the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's righteousness.

II. The need in which all mankind stand of such a righteousness.

III. How this righteousness becomes ours, or, in other words, how mankind become interested in it.

IV. In what sense this king executes judgment and justice in the earth.

V. We shall speak of that safety which Israel and Judah shall experience under this righteous King; and then conclude with some inferences, and application.

I. I am to show in what sense the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness.

1. I presume Jesus Christ is the believer's justifying righteousness.

By Jesus Christ being the believer's justifying righteousness, I mean that the believer is justified before God and accepted of him, for the sake of what Jesus Christ has done and suffered on his behalf; and not on account of his own inherent holiness

and personal righteousness. Now, sirs, that this is the undeniable sense of the sacred writers on this subject, I hope the following passages will satisfactorily evince to the pious, well disposed, and candid inquirer; Isaiah, xlv, 24, 25; "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed;" Acts, xiii, 38, 39; "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;" Rom. iii, 24, 25; "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" Rom. v, 9, 10; "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life."—That we are not justified by the merit of our own righteousness, is as evident from sacred writ; Psalm, cxliii, 2; "For in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified;" Rom. iii, 20; "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin;" Rom. iv, 2; "For if Abraham were justified by works he hath whereof to glory; but not before God;" Gal. iii, 11; "That no man is justified by the law in the sight

of God is evident; for the just shall live by faith;" that Jesus Christ suffered for our sins and died expressly that we might live, is equally the doctrine of the holy scriptures; Isaiah, liii, 4—6; "Surely he hath borne our griefs & carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted: but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed." This passage shows as plainly as language can do, that he died that we might live, and for our sakes; Heb. ix, 28; "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation;" Mat. viii, 17; "Himself took our infirmities and bore our sickness;" I. Peter, ii, 24; "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose sins ye are healed."

2. Christ is the believer's inherent as well as justifying righteousness. It is thro' the merits of Christ's death, and for his sake alone, the spirit of God operates on the hearts of any of the guilty sons of men to form them to holy tempers and conduct; and in this respect he may be said to be the Lord our inherent righteousuess; and with this accord the declarations of scripture; Isaiah, lxi, 10; "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God. For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself

with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." That this robe of righteousness is the believer's own internal holiness see the 11th verse of this chapter, and verses 1st and 2d of chapter lxii; "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring before all nations. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." To the same point, Revelation, xix, 8; "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." I hope none will conclude that because I state this linen spoken of to be the internal holiness of the believer, as I ought to do, because it is the truth of the Bible, that therefore I wish to weaken the doctrine of imputed righteousness; God forbid!! This is the doctrine, the soul cheering doctrine on which my soul has lived for upwards of thirty years, and on which, God being my helper, I hope to die.—But I am confident this is not the meaning of righteousness in the passage under consideration, and I wish in all cases to do the scriptures justice.

3. I conceive Christ may be called our righteousness in point of example. As he has set us an

example of complete righteousness, and required us to follow the same; John xiii, 15; "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you;" I. Peter ii, 21—23; "For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps; who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth.

II. I am to show the need that all mankind stand in of Jesus Christ as the Lord their righteousness.

1. This is founded on the lapse of human nature. Had mankind maintained their primeval rectitude, they would have stood in no need of a Saviour. In that event they would have been justified by the deeds of the law; Gal. iii, 12; "And the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them." But that mankind did not maintain their primitive holiness, but have apostatised from God, and are sinful and wicked till recovered to some degree of purity and goodness by divine grace, is abundantly taught in the sacred records, the truth of whose doctrine on this subject is abundantly confirmed by undeniable fact; Gen. vi, 5, 6; "And God saw that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart;" Eccl. vii, 29; "Lo this only have I found that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions;" Job, xi, 12; "For vain man would be wise, though man be born

like a wild ass's colt;" Jer. xvii. 9; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Jer. ix, 4, 5; "Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers; and they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth;" Rom. iii, 10—18. Now, if we compare matter of fact with this testimony, will not the latter be greatly corroborated by the former? When we look into the first family of human kind, we see a brother's hand reeking with a brother's blood. And, sirs, permit me to ask, with what account does the history of human kind present us from that hour to the present? Is not their history a foul and blotted page? Is not this the fact in every clime, nation and period? If, through the medium of correctly written history we look up to the courts of kings, emperors and conquerers, what corruption, deceit, chicanery and the basest intrigue shall we there see? How many sons shall we see wading to empire through the blood of their own fathers! shed sometimes by their own hand and sometimes by their order? Nay, more, how many wives shall we discover attempting the same lofty ascents, though at the expence of their husbands'-blood! Will not these things clearly prove the essential wickedness of human kind, and of consequence how much they need a Saviour? And, sirs, when we carry our research amongst the ordinary ranks of society, where we would expect to find virtue, probity and uprightness, if on earth, how stands the matter? Here a-

gain permit me to ask if the evidences of moral corruption and essential wickedness are not just about as glaring as in courts and cabinets? What robberies, murders, thefts, rapes, infidelity, family broils, murders of wives, divorces, &c. have obtained in the grades of society of which we speak? And permit me farther to ask, if they have not all obtained plentifully within the circle of our own acquaintance to operate to the full conviction of our minds, that sinners of the human family stand in absolute need of Jesus Christ as a Saviour?

2. Mankind being thus corrupt and sinful, could not qualify themselves for Heaven and happiness by exertions of their own; nor could they save themselves by the deeds of the law, as the scriptures abundantly testify; Rom. iii, 20; "Therefore by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh living be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin;" Gal. iii, 10, 11; "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident; for the just shall live by faith."

3. As the sinner could not save himself, so neither was there any other besides the Lord Jesus Christ that could save him; because there was no other could answer the claims that lay against him, or pay the ransom; Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved." None other was of sufficient worth or dignity to make atonement.

III. I am to show how this righteousness becomes ours, or in other words, how we become interested in it. This, sirs, I presume, is by imputation on the part of God, and saving faith on the part of the believer. That we become interested in it by faith on our part I presume there is no doubt, according to the christian scriptures; Mark, xvi, 16; "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;" John, xviii, 36; "He that believeth the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him;" Rom. v, 1; "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That God imputes this righteousness to the believer I think is also plain from the divine word, that is, as it is his justifying righteousness; Rom. iv, 6; "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;" 11th verse of the same chapter, latter part; "That righteousness might be imputed unto them also." Phil. iii, 9; "And be found in him not having on my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith." By God imputing Christ's righteousness to the believer, I mean that God for Christ's sake receives the believer into his favor now, and finally into Heaven and eternal happiness as fully, completely, and savingly, as if the sinner had performed a perfect and sinless obedience to the divine law, in his own person; and this view of the matter accords

perfectly with scripture; Eph. 4, 32; "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." The sacred scriptures use no language on this subject which will justify the idea of a transfer. I have no objections to some old fashioned phrases for which I have heard some very good sort of old fashioned people stickle very much, both divines and others, if understood rightly, such as the following for example; "Christ's righteousness being set to the believer's account." But it must be admitted on all hands, that this language is figurative and means neither more nor less than what we have already said and what the Apostle says before us, that God, for Christ's sake, forgives believing sinners; for I flatter myself the most ignorant on this most interesting subject, will not be gross enough to conceive of the Deity keeping something about him like a merchant's day-book or ledger.

IV. I am to show in what sense this king shall reign in righteousness, and execute judgment and justice in the earth. This is not by erecting a temporal monarchy in the world and therein executing greater righteousness than hath heretofore existed. When Christ was incarnate he had the offer of a temporal kingdom which he utterly rejected, declaring that his kingdom was not of this world; John, xviii, 36; "My kingdom is not of this world." Neither do I think that Christ will descend in the rest of the Millennium and reign a thousand years here below, as some divines do; but on the other hand I believe, "the Heavens have

received him until the times of the restitution of all things." But yet Christ has a kingdom in this world, at the head of which himself is, and it is here he executes judgment and justice in the earth. This is a spiritual kingdom, and exercised over the minds of men, his followers; Luke, xvii, 21; "Neither shall they say lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you;" Rom. xiv, 17; "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace and joy in the holy Ghost." In this kingdom he reigns in righteousness and executes judgment and justice in the earth. One of the fundamental laws of this kingdom is, "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets; Mat. vii, 12. This we think is reigning in righteousness to all the intents of moral honesty: and we think nothing short of this is. This is called with great propriety the Saviour's golden rule. Another of the great laws of this righteous king is, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law;" Rom, xiii, 8. Thus are we taught that this righteous king expressly requires all his subjects to be strictly punctual in the payment of their debts; and I presume the follower of Christ is required to be as scrupulously strict in paying his debts, as in saying his prayers. A good man ought to pay his debts, not barely because he may be compelled to do so, but particularly because God requires it on pain of his displeasure, and because it is morally right, and the neglect of it morally wrong.

Far be it from me to denounce every man as dishonest who is not up to the day in discharging his pecuniary promises. His expectations might have been quite fair with regard to payment when he made the promise; but through the failure of others, or owing to various casualties, it may be put out of his power, and yet his principles strictly and correctly honest. But for a man to make promises of payment on a given day without any intention at the time the promise is made of discharging it, or without any fair and reasonable prospect of compliance, will scarcely comport with strict moral principle. What then shall we say sirs of his conduct who has the money in his hand on the very hour the debt is due, sufficient to discharge it, and yet refusing to do so, leaves the creditor to suffer for want of his just due while he attemps to make gain of the money; can this be reconciled by any possible fair reasoning to common honesty? How does it comport with the express direction of sacred writ? "Withhold not good from him to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee." Punctuality in the discharge of contracts is entirely too much neglected by a great proportion of society, and by too many professors of religion amongst the rest. Let others do as they will, for God's sake, let us who profess to be subjects of the righteous king, endeavour to exercise strict punctuality.

Another precept of this righteous king is "render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom

tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honor to whom honor. Is not this reigning in righteousness ? See a more particular detail of the excellent laws of this righteous kingdom in Rom. xii, 9, to the end. Read these laws ; now this surpasses all the laws of the kingdoms of this world ; for it is rendering to men their imperfect as well as their perfect rights ; whereas the farthest the laws of the best regulated kingdoms of this world go, is to secure to the citizens tolerably their perfect rights, while no security is afforded by law to those that are imperfect. By a perfect right we mean that which is recoverable by coercion ; by an imperfect right we mean that which an enlightened well informed man feels binding on his conscience in the social state, but which, should he withhold it, cannot be recovered by the laws of the community. If you hold my note for a hundred dollars, and I refuse to pay it, you can recover it by a suit in law. Your right here is one of the perfect rights ; you go to the house of your wealthy & full handed neighbour, suffering with hunger ; you tell him you need and wish a meals victuals, but really are not able to pay for it. Now, who does not believe that this wealthy neighbour is just as much bound at the court of conscience and the court of God to supply you with a meal as I was to pay the note ; but yet should he be so hard hearted as to refuse, you cannot interpose with the civil law, and compel him to furnish the provision ; your right to the meal of victuals then is an imperfect right. And should he even suffer you to famish he will be subjected to no criminal

prosecution. Yet who does not believe he would be just as guilty at the forum of conscience and of God, as though he had taken your life. The great excellency of the Redeemer's righteous reign then appears in this, that it secures the imperfect as well as perfect rights; Col. iii, 12; "Put on therefore holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind," &c.

Those who will not conform to those salutary regulations, Christ will not acknowledge as his; John xv, 14; "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you; Rom. viii, 9; "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

V. I am to speak something of that safety that Israel and Judah shall experience under the reign of this righteous king. I have no doubt but the safety here spoken of may particularly mean the temporal peace and safety, which as it respects the surrounding nations, these ancient people of God should enjoy in the millenial rest and when brought to their own land; for it is uniformly represented that their peace and prosperity shall be great. Yet, there is another high and important sense in which the promise is verified to all the people of the Messiah during the whole of his administration; not indeed with respect to their temporal enemies, for from these they have at different periods suffered much; but from their spiritual enemies, in that tender and gracious care which the Prince Messiah shall exercise toward them with respect to these. From these the christian believer may receive many violent attacks, and suffer much,

but never shall be overcome; John vi, 40; "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him shall have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Now, sirs, this passage declares it to be the will of God, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him should have everlasting life; and the blessed Saviour declares he will raise him up at the last day. Should any have the temerity to assert directly in the face of this and several other passages of holy writ, that some that believe on the Saviour shall not see life, neither be raised up at the last day—They and I will enter on no dispute respecting this long contested point. There is a most plain and palpable contradiction between them and the blessed Jesus; in their hands we shall leave this contest; John x, 9, 27—33; "I am the door, by me, if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture;" "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my father's hand. My father who gave them me is greater than all; neither is any able to pluck them out of my father's hand. I and my father are one." This appears to me like dwelling safely.

1. Learn from this subject that those who discard the blessed Saviour's righteousness in the article of justification and trust in their own inherent holiness for acceptance with God, are resting on a false foundation, and risking their

own eternal happiness; "There is no other name given under Heaven among men, whereby we can be saved but that of Jesus Christ;" Acts iv, 12; and as we hope hath been demonstrated. God forgives the sinner only for Christ's sake and through his precious atonement.

2. Learn that those who pretend to trust in Christ and free grace for salvation, and talk in the pompous language of high confidence concerning their acceptance with God, while they live the slaves of lust and sin, are equally out of the way. Christ, as we have already heard, becomes inherent righteousness too to the believer; not indeed by transfusing his righteousness into them, but by inspiring with holy dispositions, through the sacred influence of his spirit, and rendering them conformed to his image. And those who have no inherent righteousness, that is, personal holiness, pretend in vain to justification by Christ's imputed righteousness; "For whom he justifies them he also glorifies; Rom. viii, 30; but he certainly glorifies none but such as are inherently holy; for none others are fit for glorification.

3. Learn that they who reject the doctrine of imputed righteousness, scripturally and rationally understood, reject one of the most precious and fundamental doctrines of the christian religion, and greatly endanger their own precious and immortal souls. This is a great foundation stone, that God has laid in Zion, and without union to Christ by faith and justification by his righteousness, there is no such thing as acceptance with him or escaping his wrath.

4. Learn the great moral excellence of the christian religion, and how favorable it is to human happiness. Its king shall reign in righteousness and execute judgment and justice in the earth. The holy religion of the blessed Jesus is not a matter of mere theory about which men are to talk idly; it is designed to make mankind wise and good, and influence the heart and practice. I have a very low opinion of that religion which evaporates all in noise and sound, and leaves the professed subject of it light, and frothy, and vain. Something like the following is the divine religion which I would wish, God being my helper, to be instrumental in promoting; then, should I think I was doing service to God and my generation; "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me; Mat. xxv, 35, 36. Ah, sirs! here is the religion will stand the test when God the judge shall come, and the globe on which you stand shall dissolve in fire. This blessed king requires his subjects to give to all their dues —to owe no man any thing but love—to assist the brother in need—to weep with them that weep—to rejoice with them that rejoice—to be affable and courteous—to forbear and forgive one another in love, if any man have a quarrel against any—to be good husbands—good wives—good parents—good children—good masters—good servants—good neighbours. O, how blessed would mankind be, if this divine religion prevailed universally!

Ought we not all then to do our utmost to promote this holy empire of the righteous reigning king amongst our fellow men, as well as to duly subject ourselves for conscience sake?

5. Learn from this subject that all true saints will finally persevere; for under the reign of this righteous king Judea shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our RIGHTEOUSNESS. AMEN.

SERMON VI.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HIDING PLACE.

Isaiah, XXXII, 2.

"*And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*"

IT hath pleased the great God in revealing his will and publishing the blessings of the everlasting Gospel to mankind, to make use of figures, allegories, and similitudes, to represent spiritual blessings, which, when correctly understood, have a great deal of beauty and significance. These allegories and similitudes are freely used by the sacred writers, both in the old and new testament scriptures: and Jesus Christ himself, that great and unparallelled teacher, uses them quite freely in addressing mankind in his administrations. To enter fully into the natural signs and images used by the divine writers to convey spiritual truths, requires some acquaintance with the nature, situation and various other circumstances of these images; and owing to our ignorance on these subjects, many useful, sublime, and beautiful passages of the sacred writings are often obscure and

almost unintelligible. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the words of my text; "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind," &c. Here various objects are selected from the great works of creation, and most beautifully applied to convey to our minds the comforting and refreshing influence of spiritual blessings in Christ's kingdom. But it is impossible for us to feel all the force and perceive all the beauty of these happy similitudes, without transporting ourselves, in imagination at least, to the place where the prophet delivered this propheey, and surveying countries which lie immediately in its vicinity and furnished Isaiah with this beautiful imagery. These similitudes, in a country like ours, "A land of brooks and rivers of waters; and of fountains and depths that spring out of the vallies and hills," abounding in forests and shades, lose half their beauty.

Our tempests and winds, our dry places and weary lands, are few in number, and gentle in degree, compared with those of Arabia, which lies immediately south of Judea and bordering on it, and which, no doubt, the prophet had immediately in view when he penned this passage. With this country the Jews may be supposed to have been well acquainted, their ancestors having traversed a great proportion of it in their forty years' journeying from Egypt to Canaan. This country, Arabia, consists of three grand divisions: Arabia Petrea, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Felix. The two former of these, Petrea and Deserta, are a great unhospitable, uninhabited, lonely desert, consisting of mere plains of barren sand and

mountains covered with naked rock; and except about the equinoxes seldom or never refreshed with rain.

The air in this country is exceeding hot and dry, and the winds that generally blow over these great plains of barren sand during the heat of the day, are not only violent, but often extremely noxious and pestiferous. Such is the extreme violence in these sandy deserts on some occasions, that they have been known to roll up mountains of sand, which have buried whole caravans of travellers. These vast plains of sand are interspersed thinly with fruitful spots, covered with grass and trees, which appear to the traveller like so many islands in a great ocean. These charming little spots have generally a fountain or well of water, and are the resting places of those religious pilgrims and trading travellers who hazard a journey through these immense and dreary regions.

The noble river Euphrates washes this country on its north-east corner. There are very few other rivers in Arabia, and even these few are generally lost in the sand in running a short distance. These few and scanty streams, the fountains on the thinly scattered greens, which cover now and then a high projecting rock, the nocturnal dews, and equinoctial rains, are all the sources whence a thirsty country, fourteen hundred miles long, and twelve hundred broad, is watered. A country like this then, my friends, you see may well be called a dry place, and a weary land, a land of dreadful winds, and destructive tempests. Let us only suppose then, what is quite the probable

truth, that the prophet had this country particularly in his view when he wrote this passage, and what a lively idea do his similitudes furnish of the spiritual refreshments which believers derive from him who is as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest."

In a land dry, weary and tempestuous like this, for a poor pilgrim to have a hiding place from the poisonous blasts of wind that threaten the destruction of his health and life;—to have a great projecting rock which would prove a covert, a place of safe retreat from those tempests of sand which frequently roll like the troubled ocean, and bury whole caravans of travellers—when parched with thirst and panting like the hunted hart, to find a spring of living water, or a noble river like the Euphrates—for a poor exposed pilgrim I say, in such a country and under such circumstances to find such a hiding place from the wind, such a covert from the tempest—such rivers of water to quench his thirst; O, what a blessing would he not esteem them? What refreshment, what comfort, what heart-felt delight would they not afford? And yet all this is the dear, the precious man Christ Jesus to his humble followers; "For a man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest."

This whole world, my brethren, considered merely as the abode of christians, and as it respects their spiritual interests, is like the deserts of Arabia—barren of all spiritual good—unfruitful in the works of righteousness—lying in wickedness. The numerous evils, which are in the world,

through lust, the snares and temptations which are sown so thickly every where, greatly endanger the spiritual health of the christian pilgrim. The world in its natural and apostate condition is a dry place and a weary land, a land of dreadful winds and destructive tempests; destitute of the comforts and graces of the spirit, and without any shelter from the scorching beams and tempestuous storms of divine indignation. But blessed be God in consequence of Christ's coming, "Waters have broken out in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desart shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;" Isaiah xxxv, 1.

To all pilgrims and travellers through this probationary state to the new Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus Christ is a hiding place from the evils and snares which await them and threaten the spiritual welfare of their souls; he is their covert from the tempests of divine wrath, which would otherwise overwhelm them and sink them to endless perdition! He is their well of living waters whence they may derive abundant supplies to quench their thirst and refresh them under spiritual languishment. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely;" Rev. xxi, 6. He is their spiritual rock to defend them from the fearfully driving tempest of divine wrath.

I. I shall make a few observations respecting this man.

II. I shall enlarge a little on the several clauses of my text; the hiding place from the wind; the covert from the tempest; the river of water in a

dry place; and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and endeavour, by divine assistance, a little more fully to unfold them.

1. We are to make a few observations respecting this man. This man is more than merely man, otherwise I fear you and I would be but little benefited by him. He is the Lord Jesus Christ because no other is ever exhibited as a hiding place. This man is very God as well as man, even the great Lord of life and glory. For the full and ample proof of this great and fundamental truth, I refer you to my sermon on Luke, ii, 9, 10; where this fundamental point is attempted to be established beyond all reasonable contradiction. This man is also truly, literally, and essentially man as he is called in my text; "And a man shall be," &c. All the tragical scene of Calvary proves it incontrovertibly. Now, sirs, it is as God-man, possessing two distinct natures in his one person, that he is qualified to be a hiding place, a covert, &c. O blessed be the Lord, our Jesus is God; yet is it strictly proper for the prophets to speak of him as man because he is man as well as God.

II. We are to enlarge on the several clauses in my text, and endeavor a little more fully to unfold them. "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind."

The Lord Jesus Christ my brethren is this hiding place, and O! is he not a glorious hiding place from the winds of temptation and seduction, while the dear people of God are in this world, where the three winds of temptation will blow upon them? One of these winds blows directly

and incessantly from hell; another from the world, and the third from our own hearts; and sometimes so furious are their onsets, that all mankind would fall before them, and be hurried into the depths of eternal destruction, were it not for our glorious hiding place. That the winds of temptation blow directly from hell is a scripture truth, and God's own people are exposed to them as well as others; I. Pet. v, 8; "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour; I. Cor. vii, 5; "And come together again that satan tempt you not for your incontinency." Jesus Christ himself was tempted by the devil, but was proof; Mat. iv, 1—10; "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, if thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, it is written man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, if thou be the son of God cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall hold thee up lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus saith unto him, it is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain,

and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glories of them; and saith unto him all these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee behind me satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." That many winds of temptation blow from the world on christians is a doctrine which all God's people have felt and do know.—Those temptations arise from the men of the world, and the things of the world; John ii, 15—17; "Love not the world neither the things of the world. If any man love the world the love of the father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but of the world." Men of the world are often great temptations to christians in various ways. Sometimes they treat with great courtesy, civility and kindness, when their design is no other than to get them off their guard and draw them into the snare of the wicked one. Sometimes they persuade them with great apparent affection to join them in their amusements and gaieties, suggesting that they are nothing but harmless amusements from which no evil will accrue. Thus they may flatter, persuade and deceive; but the ground on which believers walk is dangerous and slippery; it well becomes them to beware how they take their steps. Sometimes the men of the world, who are the greatest enemies to christianity, take other measures in order to effect the christian's halting. They provoke them, insult them, and irritate them, that

they may by these means get them to act unadvisedly. Christians, be on your guard; quit you like men; be strong. Strong and violent winds of temptation blow on christians from the things of the world. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, all beset the christian. O how much succour and support he needs!

But I presume, sirs, the most dangerous wind of temptations that ever assaults the believer, blows from his own heart; James i, 13, 14; "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own heart's lusts and enticed." Such is the human heart, we need the Lord Jesus Christ as a hiding place from our very selves. And blessed be the Lord he is one that is effectual. A serious question rises here; how is the Lord Jesus Christ our hiding place; how does he hide us from the divine indignation? I answer, he is our hiding place by succouring us when tempted; Heb. ii, 18; "For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted." This he does by giving us grace to resist the temptation, and making a way for our escape; I. Cor. x, 13; "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it." He is our hiding place, because the soul, when tempted, recollects he hath a

blessed Saviour to serve, who hath loved him and given himself for him, and that it would be dishonourable to his Saviour should he comply with temptations. Therefore he cries, I cannot offend my dying Jesus so. No, my blessed Redeemer, I honour thee, I fly to thee, and these solicitations to offend, shall only bring me nearer to my God. But again, he is our hiding place, because the soul in the hour of some violent temptation, remembers Christ has died to save sinners. He therefore feels disposed to raise a humble cry for mercy, saying Lord save me; Jesus died; in him I trust, in him I hope; to thee, through him, I raise my humble cries; he is able, he is willing, I must not, I will not, I *cannot* despair. O my dear christian friend, did you never feel the blessed Jesus your hiding place in such a perilous hour as this? "For a man shall be a hiding place from the wind."

"A covert from the tempest;" this now demands our attention. By this tempest from which the prophet declares a man shall be a covert, we are to understand the tempest of God's wrath and the awful vengeance due to sinners on account of sin: and which shall finally fall on every sinner who does not betake himself to this covert; Psalm, xi, 6; "On the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." Now, sirs, we observe with respect to this tempest, it is the due of every sinner, and will overtake every soul of Adam's race that is found out of the ark of safety. Nor is there any way to avoid sustaining it to all eternity, but by repairing to this glorious covert, the Lord Jesus Christ;

Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under Heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved." Now, from this tempest of the divine wrath the Lord Jesus Christ is a covert; he will defend the soul eternally from its rage, that it shall never overtake him; Gal. iii, 13; "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for as it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." O sirs, do you feel no love, no gratitude to him who became a curse for you? Compare Mat. xi, 28; "Come unto me all you that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest;" Rom. viii, 1; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." This tempest is the due of all mankind, because all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Rom. v, 12; "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Matter of fact goes to the same point; sinners cannot repel this dismal tempest nor cover themselves from its impetuous blasts.

Jesus Christ wards this tempest off, by sustaining its impetuous fury on our behalf, in his own sacred person; Isaiah, lix, 5; "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Yes, my christian friends, he bore it all for you and me. O how did this storm, this furious storm, beat on his innocent, devoted soul? See him in

Gethsemane, sweating great drops of blood under the awful apprehension of this destructive tempest! See the blessed Saviour, labouring up the steeps of Calvary, to the fatal spot where this awful storm was to spend its utmost fury on his innocent and holy soul, under the never-erring hand of divine direction. See him arrive at the appointed place of his shame and suffering! See your blessed Jesus nailed, christian, ignominiously nailed to the accursed tree, between Heaven and earth, that this storm might beat upon him without interruption. See the clouds collecting, blacker than Egyptian darkness! See how their flaky pillars rise! See the forked lightnings flashing! Hear the dismal thunders roar! Feel that dreadful earthquake! How the earth rocks, and reels, and shakes to her very center! Ah what a preternatural darkness! The sun refuses to emit his rays, or survey his maker's sufferings. A dread eclipse takes place without opposing spheres! And to render all more dreadful still, no doubt groups of malignant demons pressed him sorely in this hour of preternatural gloom! Thus, christian brethren, did the blessed Jesus sustain the batterings of this most dreadful storm, that he might be a covert from the tempest to you and me and other sinners of the human race. O believer, how are you indebted to that benevolent Saviour, who bore this dreadful tempest for you? A tempest which would have swept a guilty world to hell. That this tempest beat upon the holy Saviour, as we represent, is sufficiently manifest from sacred writ; Psalm xlii, 7; "Deep rolleth unto deep

at the noise of thy water spouts; all thy waves and billows are gone over me." In this strong language of his sufferings, we view the psalmist as a type of his and our suffering Lord.

"A man shall be as rivers of waters in a dry place."

Figure to yourselves, my friends in your imaginations, the poor way worn traveller, passing beneath burning suns, through scorching sands, in the torrid zone for painful days together, without one refreshing stream at which he might lave his scorched limbs, or slake his raging thirst; panting and ready to die with heat and fatigue. To such a traveller and under such circumstances how sweetly refreshing would the cooling stream be. But such, my dear sirs, is the blessed Jesus to the spiritual pilgrim in this scorching sandy desert through which we pass, not indeed to Mecca or Medina, but to the new Jerusalem; "As rivers of waters in a dry place." Ah! Believers, how dry and scorched a place this world is, and how barren of spiritual good, you but too well know; and how sweetly refreshing the Lord Jesus Christ, "who is as rivers of waters in a dry place," is, I trust, you also know. Have you not often been refreshed, my christian brother, my christian sister, by these waters of the sanctuary? Psalm xxiii, 2; "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Do any of my dear hearers ask where the blessed Jesus is to be met with, and where these consecrated waters flow? I answer, they flow in the ordinances of divine institution. There the precious Jesus is to be met with, and that his people

sweetly know. Reading the divine word is one of these ordinances. This is of divine appointment; John v, 39; "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have life, and these are they that testify of me." How often are the hearts of God's people quickened, revived, and stirred up in the service of the Lord, by reading the holy scriptures? What says your experience my christian brother? Hath not this divine word on many occasions been sweeter than honey or the honey comb to your taste? Yes, saith the humble christian, here I have found divine refreshment. This word has been a light to my feet, a lamp to my ways, and divine quickening to my heart.

Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art;
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart.

Precious volume, thy author is God; thy contents are divine, thy tendency happiness, thy end everlasting salvation. Let the wicked deride thee, let the infidel blaspheme thee, let the thoughtless neglect thee. My humble prayer, God being my helper, shall be that thy sacred contents may be delineated on the tables of my heart. So help me God! Christian brother, sister in the Redeemer, will you join me.

Waiting on a preached gospel, is another precious way in which the people of God are often sweetly refreshed. How often has the christian been quickened by waiting on a preached gospel. How has the truth come home with light and power to his heart? How is he quickened, revived,

comforted and blest? Christian believer "Is not a day in the house of the Lord better than a thousand? Would you not rather be a door keeper in the house of your God, than dwell in the tents of sin?" Methinks I hear you answer with rapture, yes, when fed with practical preaching, and evangelical truths and not led into the thorny fields of controversy and embittered debate. Does my brother in the ministry answer here, "We are exhorted in sacred writ to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints!" Yes, my brother, but not bitterly. But what was this faith? Consult the connection and you will see it was the great and essential doctrine of our Lord's divinity. Here our earnestness, provided it do not degenerate into bitterness, is all justifiable. This is one of the great fundamental truths of our divine religion. This is that sure foundation stone which God hath laid in Zion. But suppose the great bone of contention betwixt my brother and myself be, whether faith or repentance be prior in the human mind in the order of nature. Is this worthy of the same zeal and earnest contention as the divinity of our Saviour; I presume not, sirs, nor do I see that it is likely to affect the salvation of my brother, what side he takes on this question, and many others easily named. Suppose I think that it will do very well to begin the Sabbath at midnight, to which I have always been used, and felt my conscience quite at rest in this observation, thought I met the smiles and favor of my God, and great sweetness and enjoyment in the same; is it worth any man's while to take great pains and

care, now in my 58th year, to convince me I have always been wrong, and must for the balance of my life commence my observation of this hallowed day at some different hour of the twenty-four. But should my brother think differently, and in order the better to please his God commence his observation at sundown, I shall spend but little zeal to convince him he is wrong; I might perhaps observe to him pleasantly enough, that if my wagon had just received her load at the moment the Sun set, I should not like to drive her to my barn and unload her on Sunday; neither should I think it very convenient to expose the load to the weather for twenty four hours. Be it recollected, I am not arguing this matter at all, but simply stating that I do not think it worthy of much argumentation, but think either way will do well if the observer be conscientious and sincere. In prayer to Almighty God, how often has the true christian been sweetly refreshed, and felt his heart enlarged? Hath not his communion and fellowship been with the Father and the Son? Has he not come even to the seat of his God? Has not his heart been too full for his language to express his wants, and "hath not the spirit himself made intercessions for him with groanings which could not be uttered;" Rom. viii, 26. In the seals of God's gracious covenant, those living waters are to be found, baptism and the Lord's supper. My christian friend, have you not sometimes felt your heart sweetly enlarged in commemorating your Saviour's precious love at his holy board? While the consecrated emblems have been handled

and tasted, has not your faith been exercised on the Redeemer to your great satisfaction, and your heart been as the chariot of Aminadab in his service? Have not your dear Saviour and yourself reciprocated affection on so holy an occasion? Have you been able to say in review of this, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste;" Cant. ii, 3. In this christian ordinance the waters of salvation flow; "Therefore with joy shall ye draw waters out of the wells of salvation;" Isaiah xii, 3. I presume, humble, pious, modest, christian conversation is another thing, by engaging in which, christians sometimes drink those living waters. O christians when you have conversed with one another of your dear Jesus by the way, and the great things of your heavenly Father's kingdom, have not your hearts burned within you? I think God's people have often found this religious conversation profitable, and have felt the living waters flow whilst thus engaged. And this is a sentiment which the scriptures plainly favour; Mal. iii, 16; "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name."

"A man shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Again, my friends, paint to yourselves the weary traveller, traversing great sandy deserts for days together, beneath an almost vertical sun, for intercepting whose scorching beams, no venerable oak, nor hospitable elm

spreads his branches; how would his heart be refreshed, and his soul rejoiced, when he would meet with some fine projecting rock which cast a cool and welcome shade. But precisely such is the situation of the spiritual pilgrim. He is passing through burning sands, beneath scorching suns; but Jesus is his rock. Glory to God for such a rock. How cool the shade! How sweet the rest! Do you feel it my christian brother? Ah! then give God the glory. Fatigued almost to the death of your soul, in a world unfriendly to religion, hostile to your spiritual interests, and thwarting your course heavenward; you retire to this great projecting rock, and there sweetly repose, sheltered securely from every scorching beam, and from all the fiery darts of the wicked. But do you ask my dear friends, what are the refreshments the soul meets with here? What are his exercises, his spiritual comforts, feelings and views, when he takes shelter under this high projecting rock? I think he feels very sensibly the love of God to our lost and ruined world, and ardently loves him in return; "My heart was hot within me; while I mused the fire burned;" Psalm xxxix, 3, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the scriptures;" Luke xxiv, 32. Another thing the believer feels is a sincere, heart hatred of sin and holy kindlings of repentance, that he has ever meddled with the abominable thing and thus offended his God; Zachariah xii, 10; "They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one that mourneth for an only son, and

be in bitterness for him as one in bitterness for a first born;" Job xlii, 5, 6; "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." I think the pious mind, when thus favored, feels strength derived from a present God, enabling him to resist sin and temptation; "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me;" Phil. iv, 13. At such time he feels lively without tiring, and fixed without wandering; "His heart is fixed trusting in the Lord."

1. Learn from this subject, the infinite love of God to man. Hath Jesus Christ become a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest? Hath he borne the storms of divine wrath in the sinner's place? Was the blessed Jesus wounded for our transgressions? Was he bruised for our iniquities? Was the chastisement of our peace upon him, and with his stripes are we healed? O what love! What grace! What divine and godlike compassion is manifested here!

2. That whatever storms, and tempests, whatever burning sands, and scorching suns await the spiritual pilgrim in passing through the deserts of this present state to the spiritual Canaan, he shall presently make good the port of eternal rest, where he shall be forever with the Lord and go no more out.

3. Learn the awful danger of unregenerate sinners, and the dire ruin which will overtake them if they remain enemies to the Lord Jesus Christ. O sinner, unregenerate soul, what will become of you, when such a tempest shall beat upon you

as overwhelmed the holy Jesus on the cross? Did this tempest beat so hard upon the immaculate Redeemer as to extort from him the cry upon the cross? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" What then must be your doleful situation, unregenerate sinner, when this tempest shall beat upon your naked soul in one eternal storm? Can you bear up under the awful indignation of the Lord? Can you sustain the vengeance of the Almighty? O sinners, be persuaded to cease from your opposition to God. Ground the arms of your impious and unreasonable rebellion; lie at mercy, and receive the offered salvation. So may God enable you. AMEN.

SERMON VII.

THE INFLUENCES OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT ATTAINABLE BY IMPORTUNATE PRAYER.

Luke, XI, 13.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Amongst all the duties incumbent on mankind relating to their spiritual interests, there is none more profitable for advancing the same than prayer when rightly performed; and yet there is scarcely any christian duty more generally neglected. This is a duty the most natural and rational, and sensibly pressed on the intelligent man's conscience by the light of nature. The sacred scriptures set an extremely high estimate on this duty, and uniformly represent it as replete with benefit to those who are exercised therein. Those sacred oracles represent it as instrumental in procuring every blessing, both spiritual and temporal, and give us the highest assurances that our labours of this kind shall not be in vain in the Lord. Jesus Christ expressly informs us, that "he that asketh shall receive; that he that seeketh shall find, and that to

him that knocketh it shall be opened," verses 9, 10; The blessed Redeemer spake a parable to the Jews, that men ought always to pray and not faint, "Saying there was in a city a judge who feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him saying, avenge me of mine adversary; and he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet, because this widow troubleth me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said hear what the unjust judge saith; and shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them? Yea, I say unto you he will avenge them speedily." In our text and context he reasons from the conduct of an affectionate and fullhanded father in bestowing on his son the things for which that son petitioned him; that God will bestow on those who ask the sacred influences of the holy spirit; "If a son shall ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg will he give him a scorpion?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts," &c.

I. I propose to show in what sense the holy spirit may now be expected to be given to the children of God.

II. When a person may be thus said to have obtained the holy spirit.

III. How we are to ask for the holy spirit that we may obtain him.

IV. Demonstrate the certainty of those obtaining the holy spirit who thus ask for him; then conclude with some inferences and application.

I. We are to show in what sense the holy spirit may now be expected to be given, to the children of God.

I presume we are not to look for this sacred agent to be given to believers now in his miraculous operations, as he once was to some of mankind. Time was when God, for the purpose of confirming divine revelation, and acquiring credit to the messages he sent by his inspired servants to the world, gave his holy spirit in his miraculous operations to mankind; witness Acts, iii, 6—8; "Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk; and he took him by the right hand and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength; and he, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God;" Acts, ix, 36—42. "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which, by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms, deeds which she did; and it came to pass in those days that she was sick and died; whom, when they had washed, they laid in an upper chamber; and forasmuch as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come unto them: Then Peter arose and went with them; when he was come they brought

him into the upper chamber, and all the widows stood by him weeping and showing him the coats and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them; but Peter put them all forth and kneeled down and prayed: and turning him to the body said, Tabitha arise; and she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter she sat up; and he gave her his hand and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive; and it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord." The great design of these miraculous operations of the spirit was, that the world might see, by the divine power manifestly attending the messages of the gospel, that it was of God. But the canon of scripture being now closed, we are no longer to look for the spirit's influences in this miraculous sense. We have Moses and the prophets; if we will not hear them, neither will we hear though one rose from the dead. The only sense, then, in which the holy spirit is now to be bestowed on those who ask him, is as a spirit of illumination, of regeneration, of sanctification and comfort. That he may and will be thus bestowed on those who ask him is abundantly taught in the word of God. That he may be expected as a spirit of illumination, see the following passage of sacred writ; Psalm, xxxvi, 9; "In thy light shall we see light;" Luke, ii, 32; "A light to lighten the Gentiles;" Eph. v, 14; "Wherefore he saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light;" but how does Christ give the believer light? Is it not by the sacred influence of his blessed

spirit? Then the divine spirit is a spirit of illumination; II. Cor. iv, 6; "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Now, it is certainly by the spirit of the Lord he thus shines and gives us the light.

That he is the spirit of regeneration, see our Saviour's explanation of his own language to Nicodemus; John, iii, 5; "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This proves at once that every one who is regenerated, is regenerated by the divine influence, and of consequence, that the spirit of the Lord is a spirit of regeneration.

That he may be expected as a spirit of sanctification, see the following; Rom. xv, 16; "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the holy Ghost;" I. Cor. vi, 11; "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." This certainly shows that the spirit of God is received as a spirit of sanctification by all the people of God.

That he may be expected as a spirit of comfort, see the following; Acts, ix, 31; "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the holy Ghost, were edified; John, xvi, 7; "Nevertheless,

I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." Here the divine spirit which all shall receive who ask him is called the comforter. So true is it that he is received by all the pious as a spirit of comfort.

II. I am to show when a person may be said thus to have obtained the holy Ghost. Here I would remark, I think it very possible a person may have obtained the holy spirit as a spirit of illumination when he has not received him as a spirit of regeneration or sanctification. And to this point I presume the christian scriptures are quite clear and plain; Heb. vi, 4—6; "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." But we conceive he never is received as a spirit of sanctification without having been received previously as a spirit of illumination. But when we attempt to show when a person may be said to have received the spirit in the sense of my text, it will be in the full sense of it as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification as well as a spirit of illumination. I presume when one who has been ignorant of the great God and of Christ his Son, and the way of salvation through his precious atonement, is brought to see and comprehend and be

pleased with, and acquiesce in, the gospel scheme of salvation, admiring the wisdom of God, and adoring his grace therein, that he hath received the holy spirit, at least, in his illuminating and regenerating influences; John, i, 13; "Which were born not of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but God;" Again, when a person has, and manifests the spirit of Christ in his daily walk and conversation; when he manifests the same self-denied and lowly temper as the divine Saviour did, then, I think it is plain he has received the spirit of God; Rom. viii, 14; "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" 9th verse of the same chapter; "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" again, those to whom God hath given the influence of his holy spirit do certainly mortify the deeds of the body; Rom. viii, 13; "But if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live:" al those carnal inclinations from whence the undue and irregular indulgences of the body arise; lasciviousness, pride, envy, wrath, malice, &c. Again, when divine things and divine truths are impressed on the mind with clearness and energy, which I think is sometimes the case with the believer, insomuch that his tongue cannot express the clearness and strength of his ideas, he may be said to enjoy the holy spirit; and the scriptures give us this view of the matter very clearly; Rom. viii, 26; "Likewise the spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself maketh intercession

for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." I think when persons come to a comfortable and sweet persuasion of the pardon of sin and that God is their reconciled Father in Christ, they enjoy the influences of the sacred spirit; Gal. iv, 6; "And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." Again, when christians live in love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, &c. they may rest assured they have obtained the holy spirit, for these certainly are his fruits; Gal. v, 22, 23. Again, another thing which may be predicated of those who have obtained the spirit in any tolerably high degree, is greater correctness of knowledge in divine things, and considerable advances in that knowledge through the influences and illuminations of that holy spirit; Psalm, xxv, 14; "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant;" Mat. xi, 25; "I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because shou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes;" let as many as be perfect be thus minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you;" Phil. iii, 15.

Here, perhaps, it may be asked how we are to discriminate satisfactorily between those who have obtained the saving influences of the blessed spirit, and those who have not, as there are a great many pretenders to divine influence in these times? To this question I answer, those who have really obtained the saving influences of the spirit of God,

will conform strictly to the divine word in temper and conduct, making this word, and not any impulses of their own minds, the rule of their behaviour. The spirit of God does not teach contrary to the word but in the most perfect unison and consonance with it. And when we hear people making high and bold pretences to what is contrary to the divine word, we may rest assured they are in that case influced by a spirit of delusion, and not savingly led by the spirit of God at all. Farther, I think the spirit of God leads those who are the subjects of it, to a modest, gentle,, unassuming behaviour toward their fellow men in all their intercourse with them. Wherever the good spirit of the Lord dwells as an inmate in the human soul, he sets aside all proud, haughty, supercilious airs, of which he can never approve;" James, iv, 6; "Wherefore he saith, the Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble;" I. Thess. ii, 7; "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;" Col. iii, 12; "Put on therefore, as the elect of God holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering;" Titus, iii, 1, 2; "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to do every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing meekness to all men." Now, sirs, permit me to ask every sober, discret man who reads these things, if he, as a man of reflection, can ever bring himself to believe that the holy spirit who dictated these desirable things, can ever, by his immediate influence inspire men

with a proud, haughty, censorious, domineering spirit? Impossible! Impossible! Wherever such a spirit reigns, rest assured it is from some other quarter. It is not from the God of peace and love. We have a sure word of prophecy, whereunto we would do well to take heed; let us not be deceived.

III. I am to show how we are to ask for the holy spirit that we may obtain him.

1. We are to ask in the simplicity, honesty, and integrity of our hearts. We must not ask him when we do not wish to obtain him, neither are sincere. This would be a criminal mocking of God; I. Sam. xvi, 7; "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart;" I. Sam. xxii, 19; "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God;" John, iv, 24; "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

2. We must ask believingly and in faith; Mark, xi, 24; "Therefore I say unto you, whatever things ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall receive them."

3. We are to pray for him perseveringly, never giving over our sacred suit until we obtain the blessing; Hosea, vi, 3; "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord;" I. Thess. v, 17; "Pray without ceasing." Then we see we are never to relax our earnest exertions in prayer for this holy spirit, but keep them up, with our minds intent on the blessing, so shall we prevail with our God.

4. We must ask in the name of Christ, with humble reliance on his merit for obtaining the blessing. This is the only way through which we are really likely to succeed: and it is the express requisition of the Saviour; John, xiv, 13, 14; "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it;" John, xv, 16; "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you;" John, xvi, 23; "In that day ye shall ask me nothing; verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you."

IV. I am to demonstrate the certainty of those obtaining the holy spirit who thus ask him. For this we have the express promise of God himself; Mat. vii, 7—11; "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?" Now, since the great God has condescended to bind himself by promise to give the holy spirit to them that ask him, may we not most safely confide in the faithful

performance? And permit me farther to ask, if the experience of all saints in all ages does not go to confirm the same truth? Have not the most prayerful people generally been the most spiritual? The saints have found the promise good. Here a question of serious import arises, and which requires a candid answer. How are we to know we certainly possess the spirit? Are his influences to be sensibly felt? To this question I answer, I do not think we are sensible of the influence of the divine spirit by contact; he is not materially to be felt as we feel matter; and yet I think we may be humbly confident, if rightly exercised, that we possess the spirit's influences. But the thing plainly felt by the pious man is not the immediate operation of the spirit, but the happy effect of that operation. The spirit operates on the human mind, an effect is produced; the immediate operation we do not feel, the effect we feel just as sensibly as we feel other things. The soul is regenerated; holy exercise of heart immediately succeeds; of this holy exercise we may be just as sensible as we are that we love our wives, our children, or our friends. And why should we not; the exercise in one case is love, and love in the other too. You never saw the wind. You have seen its effects a thousand times, and felt it too. You have seen the trees of the forest prostrated, or the roofs torn off your cabins. The wind that does all this you never saw. Well, christian friends, if at any time I feel that I hate sin very sensibly, that I breathe most earnestly after deliverance from its power; that my heart

aspires after an infinitely holy God above all things, that I have sweet peace and joy in believing on the divine Saviour, that my soul is delighted with the character and government of God, that I rejoice in the universal dominion of the Almighty, I feel just as confident that the spirit has been at work, as you do that a violent wind has blown when you find a thousand trees torn out of root and prostrated on a hundred acres of land. For confident I am these holy tempers are not in my heart by nature.

1. Learn from this subject that there is a high and important sense in which mankind, engaging faithfully in the service of God and the exercise of prayer, may expect to receive the holy spirit as a spirit of light, of sanctification and comfort. And do we not feel, brethren, that we greatly need him as a spirit of illumination? Are not our minds by nature dark and benighted? O how little do we know of God and the scheme of salvation as we ought to know? Let it be our earnest and assiduous prayer, that the good spirit of our God may shine upon the road that leads us to the lamb, and illumine all our path. O happy they who enjoy the light of his sacred countenance!

Is he not enjoyed also by the dear people of God as a spirit of sanctification? Is it not by his sacred agency that they are made more and more conformable to the blessed law of their God? And do not all true saints in a measure enjoy him thus? Do not God's people enjoy him as a spirit of comfort? Is he not the very consolation of their souls?

Are they not sometimes comforted with the comforts of God, and is not this divine consolation the happy result of the holy spirit's operation too? Ah! christian friends, how much is he needed? And how earnestly to be invoked? Come thou sovereign and holy agent, dwell by thy sacred and sanctifying influence in our hearts, preside over us in all our ways, guide us to the rock that is higher than we, and eventually bring us all to thy glory.

2. Learn that if we do obtain the influence of the holy spirit, it will be evident from our temper and conduct; not indeed by proud, haughty, self-sufficient and supercilious airs; but by humility, meekness, gentleness, and an evident unction from on high. All pretences to the spirit's influences are vain, where the life and manners of the individuals making them are not manifestly meliorated.

3. Learn how earnestly we ought to press on to know the Lord, and how perseveringly engaged we should be to obtain the divine influence! Not a few prayers and cries are to answer the end of our salvation with whatever apparent fervor they may appear to be put up. We must persevere to the end, for the promise of acceptance is only to such, while the Lord expressly declares "that if any man draw back, his soul has no pleasure in him;" Heb. x, 38.

4. Learn the great encouragement we have; God has promised to bestow the blessing. He is faithful and will perform. God has not said to the house of Jacob, "Seek ye my face in vain."

5. Learn that those pretended teachers who attempt to bring into disrepute the doctrine of divine operation, and degrade the spirit's influences, are on the most dangerous ground, and must eventually be found fighting against God. The doctrine of divine influence is the great doctrine of the word of God, it lies at the foundation of our holy religion, and cannot be dispensed with only at the ruin of immortal souls and the very destruction of the whole gospel plan. This appears to me one of the great and essential doctrines of our divine religion, without which it might just as well be set aside. Concede the doctrine of the Saviour's divinity, the atonement he made for sin, regeneration, and sanctification by divine influence, and I can easily indulge my charitable hope, notwithstanding the differences of opinion which may obtain in lesser matters; but how a fallen, sinful creature, can be a genuine christian, knowingly and wilfully denying either or all these doctrines, is an object too dim for my vision. I think there must be a radical defect where these sacred and fundamental doctrines are not admitted.

May the good Lord illumine all our minds, and give us to see the truth as it is in Jesus. AMEN.

SERMON VIII.

YOUNG PEOPLE PLEAD WITH ON FAIR AND RATIONAL PRINCIPLES TO REMEMBER THEIR CREATOR.

Ecclesiastes, XII, 1.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them."

IT must be manifest to every attentive and intelligent reader of the sacred scriptures, that the divine writers every where set the highest estimate on the season of youth for seeking religion and engaging in the service of God. The most gracious and encouraging promises are made to those who engage early in the discharge of their duty; "Prov. viii, 17; "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me;" and religion and its sacred duties are most earnestly inculcated on all young people. A solemn example of this occurs in my text; "Remember thy creator," &c. The connection of my text is this; in the 9th verse of the preceding chapter, the king of Israel addresses young men ironically;

"Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will call thee into judgment." He then exhorts them to remove sorrow from their hearts and evil from their flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.

"Remember thy creator in the days of thy youth," &c.

I. I propose to show how, or in what sense, young people ought to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

II. The obligations under which they are to remember their Creator thus; and then conclude with some inferences and application.

1. Remember, my dear youth, that God created you and gave you the existence you enjoy, and realize the solemn obligations under which you are to honor and obey him. That God is your Creator as well as the Creator of all men, I need not use many elaborate arguments to prove. This is one of those self-evident propositions that carries its evidence clearly with it, and approves itself to the human mind at first contemplation. No being could create itself, because this supposes the being to operate, and skilfully too, before it exists. An absurdity of the first magnitude.

Now, if God made you, then I presume it is an axiom of common sense, that you ought to serve him. You are his creatures, and entirely at his disposal. He stands in a nearer relation than your father on earth. Your earthly father is only the

instrumental and secondary cause of your existence; but God is the prime and efficient cause. Now, if the reasoning is fair that you ought to honour your parents because of the relation they sustain to you, the reason is still stronger why you should honour your God, because the relation he sustains is still nearer. Permit me to hope, my dear youth, you will all feel the force of this reason, and comply with your duty.

2. Remember God is your preserver as well as your Creator. That this is the fact is about as self-evident as that God made you. While God preserves you who can destroy? And when he commands you down to the dust who can save? Can the most affectionate husband preserve from the stroke of death the beloved wife of his bosom? Can the most fond and indulgent parent preserve from the grim destroyer of our race, the child of his love? Can the most frugal and careful planter command the clouds of Heaven to discharge their necessary and salutary contents on his parched and withering crops? If not, then we certainly ought to feel our dependence on God as our preserver, and as such we ought to remember, acknowledge, and adore him, and make his will the rule of our duty in all cases.

3. Remember God is your benefactor, and as such gratefully acknowledge him. God not only preserves you in being but crowns your lives with his tender mercies. Do you not know that this is the fact, and that I speak the truth? Are not many of you whom I now have the pleasure to address, the children of careful, frugal, affectionate,

and well doing parents, who plentifully supply your wants and even prevent them. Do you know any thing about want? Nothing. Have you not been educated in the most discreet and careful manner? Has not every generous and affectionate attempt been made to expand and liberalise your opening minds, and thus render you a blessing to society and a blessing to yourselves. O my dear young friends of both sexes, you are scarcely aware of the tender anxieties I feel when I address you. You are the dear objects of my solicitude and most tender care. The snows and frosts of fifty-seven winters have not so congealed the affections of this heart, but that they are all afloat, with the ardour of twenty-five, when you are the dear, the beloved objects of my empassioned address. Ah my children, these tears which flow so copiously, will run; I cannot restrain them, and address you, nor need I try. Be assured, however, there is nothing of the crocodile about them; they are the tears of unfeigned affection and sincerity; "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears day and night, if they would weep you into glory, and wash your sins away." This they will not do. The blood of Christ alone can do this. To that I tenderly recommend you; O that it might be effectual. But my children, this gust of passion I will endeavor to check, and reason with you deliberately again. Do you not feel your obligations to your God for all his benefits? Are you ready to answer me, thanks to my frugal parents for all their care; my wants are well supplied,

and my parents I will love and honor. Well, my dear youth, your parents you ought to love and honor, and most tenderly ought your duties to be discharged to them; and palsied be the tongue that now addresses you, rather than it should be employed in attempting to relax the obligations you feel to your parents. But permit me to ask you two or three pertinent questions, which I hope you will most seriously answer. Could your parents with all their frugality and care thus supply your wants without the attendant blessing of your God? Could they command the due portions of sunshine and rain to bring to perfection the corn, the wheat, the cotton, the tobacco, &c.? You must have good sense enough to know they could not. Then are not your obligations still strongest to your God? Moreover, who was it that so ordered human things, that you are the descendants of these frugal, careful, prudent parents, and not the offspring of some poor, worthless, guilty spendthrift, prodigally wasting the last shilling in the tavern, while his family at home is crying, piteously crying for bread, and none to give them? Will my dear youth answer this question, and feel and improve the answer rightly? Do not favours conferred bring with them proportional obligations? But who, my dear young friends, has bestowed on you such favours as God, and to whom can you possibly be under equal obligations? Remember your Creator then as your benefactor.

4. You ought to remember, my dear youth, that Almighty God has the destinies of all men in his

hands; that he can succeed and prosper all your pursuits in life, or bring all your schemes and plans to nothing and to foolishness, as he sees proper. Remember him then as the great disposer of events, and that he is the God of Providence as well as the God of grace and creation.

5. You ought to remember him as your great and adorable redeemer, who hath not withheld his own dear son, but hath delivered him up to the death for us all, that he might deliver us from every evil work. You ought gratefully to remember that love of our blessed Saviour, which brought him down from heaven to earth for man's redemption; the sufferings he endured; the contradiction of sinners against himself; the obloquy and reproach cast upon him by his enemies; the insults of the mob; his bloody sweat in Gethsemane; his crown of thorns; the racking tortures of the cross; his outcry there, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! his death, resurrection and ascension to glory. And remember, my dear friends, if the blessed Jesus has done so much for you, you ought to love him and keep his commandments.

6. You ought to remember that the Lord your creator is a God of the most strict and inexorable justice, who will by no means acquit the finally impenitent and ungodly, but deal with them in his vengeance and ire; Psalm ix, 17; "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" Psalm xi, 6; "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their

cup." Remember, my dear youth, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" Heb. x, 31; and remember there is but one way in which you can escape this awful, this fearful doom! And that is by embracing the blessed Redeemer as offered in the gospel of grace; Mark xvi, 16; "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

7. Remember that the Lord is a God of infinite grace and mercy, ready to forgive iniquity, sin, and transgression on the sinner's sincere repentance for the sake of Christ his dear son.

8. Remember that God who made you will be the final and impartial judge of all mankind, and that the issues of life and death are in his hand; that he will decide the final fates of all mankind; that he will eventually raise the pious and godly to the abodes of felicity, where they shall behold his lovely face forever, and triumph eternally in his blissful presence, seeing him without a cloud between; that he will sink the wicked and ungodly down to eternal ruin, where they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

II. I proceed to point out the obligations under which youth are thus to remember their Creator. These obligations I think may all be reduced with propriety to two things, the command of God and their own interest.

1. The commandment of their God is laid on them to this purpose, which is certainly a good reason why they should remember their Creator. Seeing God is our creator, preserver, and

benefactor, as we have already heard so largely, he doubtless possesses a well founded authority over us, and has a right to lay on us such commandments as he sees proper, and we are bound in all good conscience to obey him; and this reasoning is so obvious that I presume none will deny it. Hence, then, our solemn obligation to obey our God, his just and reasonably founded commandment.

2. I think we are under obligation to remember our Creator in the days of our youth, from our own interest in the matter which is thereby so plainly promoted. That mankind ought to engage in such things as will manifestly promote their own interest, when these things are not contrary to God's law, is a position which will scarcely be disputed by any man of candour and intelligence. But remembering our Creator in the days of our youth, or which is about the same thing, that early religion will promote our interest, and is not contrary to God's law, is equally plain. Therefore, youth ought to engage early in religion. If these premises are fair the conclusion follows infallibly. We will now examine a little whether early religion will promote our best interests. This examination we shall conduct in the light of holy scripture, and fair correct reasoning.

1. Early religion will preserve you from a thousand snares and evils in life to which you will be liable if you remain neglectors of your God. True religion is the best security against falling into those practices which are shameful, disgraceful and injurious in the world. Permit me to ask

you, my dear young friends, small as your acquaintance in the world, and experience in life may be, if you have never seen some old grey-headed man, intoxicated and quarrelling with his family, wasting his property, degrading himself, and trespassing in the most outrageous manner on the feelings of his wife and children; or if you have been so happy that you have never seen this odious and disgusting sight, have you never heard of it? Perhaps at your age, my young friend, this man was as modest, decent, and temperate as you now are. Had he got religion at that lovely and dangerous period of human life, he would have been secured against this base, degrading practice, with the whole train of its concomitant evils. Pious and godly men do not get drunk. If religion best secures you against loose and disgraceful practices, then is it not your interest to embrace it without delay? Do not mistake me, my young friends, I am not predicting that if you do not obtain religion, and pass through the world without it, that you must necessarily become intemperate and degraded. I predict no such thing; you may pass through the world with credit, and live and die temperate men; but should you embrace religion, you will possess the best security against such evil and guilty practices. And the fact is, I have known men, who when they were your age were temperate, discreet, and in as good credit as any in the counties in which they lived, that are now as base sots as any I know on earth. Now, my dear youth, are not these things worth your consideration and improvement?

2. Early religion will afford you a much larger field of usefulness, and far superior opportunity of doing good in the world, than you will have if you embrace religion late in life, admitting you should be sure to embrace it at a late period, which, however, is by no means certain provided you put it off now. When men get religion late in life their opportunities of doing good are extremely limited, however well they may be disposed.

3. When we get religion early in life, we shall be disposed to discharge punctually those interesting duties of young people which will not fail to secure us the favour and esteem of our fellow men. For example, a youth who gets religion early will be disposed to render that obedience and respect to his parents, which will secure him the favour and approbation of all the well thinking part of society. That filial obedience will do this, is more than suggested by divine inspiration, and is quite notorious from matter of fact; Prov. i, 8, 9; "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; for they shall be an ornament of grace to thy head and chains about thy neck." And permit me to ask who, that is acquainted with society and what transpires in it from day to day, does not know that filial duty and obedience are more pleasing to mankind than almost any other duty which young people perform? Youths who excel in these duties never fail to be highly thought of and become favourites with their acquaintances; while the obstinate and disobedient youth, who early becomes impatient of parental control, and throws off all the reins of family

restraint before he emerges from his teens, is generally lightly esteemed by the reflecting part of mankind. And how awful are the denunciations of divine vengeance against such in holy writ? "The eye that mocketh his father, and refuseth to obey the law of his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out and the young eagles shall eat it;" Prov. xxx, 17. Awful denunciation! How plainly does it impart that no good shall come of the obstinate and ill-disposed youth toward his parents. Do you ask me, my dear young friends, how long this duty of filial reverence and respect must be binding, and how long you must be under these leading strings? Asking the question, my young friends, makes a bad impression on my mind, because it carries in its countenance the idea of being tired of filial duty. The question, however, I will answer according to my views. A period will come when you will have a right to manage your own business at your own discretion, and that, too, though you should differ in opinion from your parents, and this period will be whenever you are of sufficient years of discretion to act for yourself, and leave your fathers' families. But, my dear youth, a period will never come, during the time that you and your parents both live, when it will not be your duty to render the most marked reverence and respect to your parents, nor should such period ever be desired by you. Ever, O ever, act toward these venerable people in such manner, that whenever you pass by their dusty beds hereafter, you may have this sweet reflection, there lie my parents, and thank my God, I never acted

toward them, since I have been capable of reflection and realising my relation, in such manner as to put their feelings on the rack. Take this advice, my young friends, from one who regards your welfare, and act up to it most religiously. I have no parents now. My father died when I was quite a boy; my mother lived several years after I was a married man and settled in the world. According to the best of my recollection I am not conscious of having ever treated that woman, that venerable, that best of mothers ill, since I came to the years of reflection, and I thank my God that I am not, for if I were, the reflection would leave a sting in my bosom that nothing on earth could ever extract. But I think were she here now I would be more officiously attentive to her comfort and gratification than ever, now when I know all the fulness of a parent's heart, his solicitudes and tender anxieties from a large and extensive experience.

4. Getting religion early will secure you against the commission of a great many crimes, of which you will otherwise very probably be guilty, and which will lay a foundation for the most bitter remorse and repentance, if you ever embrace religion at all. Should you have families hereafter, and not get religion till you are forty or fifty years of age, admitting you get it then, may you not by loose principles and licentious practice, have done an irreparable injury to your families, yea, an injury which you never may have it in your power to repair, though you seek to do it carefully with tears.

3. By getting religion early and remembering your Creator in the days of your youth, you will be happily prepared for death whenever it may arrive; whereas, if you put off religion until riper years or old age, you may be taken at surprise by this most dreadful of all messengers; and O, how dreadful is the death of such poor despairing sinner! Ah, how extreme his anguish! Forced, reluctantly forced into the presence of his God, to give an account, and no due preparation made for the solemn, the eventful change! Consider this my dear youth, when you feel disposed to procrastinate in the great concerns of your precious souls. This is not supposing too much, because it is what happens a thousand times, and may happen with you as well as others if you are not on your guard.

1. Learn from this subject how careful ministers of the gospel, parents of children, and teachers of schools ought to be in discharging their duty to the young and tender plants committed to their care. How important is their duty in this respect? How awfully responsible the trust committed to them? Of how much consequence is the young and rising generation to the church and to the world? Are they not to be the support of God's cause, when we, their parents and seniors, shall sleep in the silent dust? What tender parent, what faithful minister, what friend of mankind can look upon them without anxious solicitude and tender emotions? If it be the indispensible duty of young people to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, then parents and ministers ought to point them to the duty and sedulously

instruct them in the same; Deut. iv, 7—9; "For what nation is there so great that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons and thy sons' sons;" Deut. xi, 18—20; "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your souls, and bind them as a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes; and you shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in the house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them on the door posts of thy house and upon thy gates;" Prov. xxii, 6; "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it;" Eph. vi, 4; "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Now, my dear youths, suffer me to make an application of this subject to you. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Remember he made you, preserves you and protects you, and the solemn and consequent obligations under which you are. Remember your present and final destinies are in his Almighty hand. Remember he sent Christ to die for the sins of which you are guilty,

and realize the tortures he bore; remember the justice of God, his omniscience and omnipresence; remember he is a sin-hating and sin-avenging God; that he is a God, jealous of his honour, that his glory he will not give to another, nor suffer his praise to be transferred to idols. O, my dear youth, make your peace with God by sacrifice. Seek him while he is to be found, call upon him while he is near; receive the Saviour by faith; so shall an abundant entrance be administered unto you, into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. Learn from this subject with what care and circumspection we, who are parents, ought to conduct ourselves before our children. Are children required to love and reverence their parents? Then ought our conduct, who are parents, to be such as to render the duty easy and pleasant. It appears to me a very easy duty for some children to reverence their parents, while it appears a duty very difficult of performance to others. The conduct and deportment of some parents is so correct, so upright, so regulated by discretion and propriety, so prudent and dignified on all occasions, that the child who has arrived at any years of discretion and would not reverence such a parent, must be a semi-savage indeed. To the children of such parents, the filial obedience required must be easy and pleasant. But O, dear parents, what shall I say with regard to others of a very different cast? All whose conduct is calculated to render filial reverence difficult indeed; intemperate, profane, licentious parents: O how shall a poor

son, who is a youth of strict discretion, reverence the parent whose reason is grossly debased by intemperance, and whose attitude and deportment are just calculated to destroy reverential regard and filial obedience. O parents, for God's sake let us guard our conduct well, and never indulge in improprieties of behaviour or any thing low and degrading in the presence of our children. We never ought to indulge in wrong doing, but should we so indulge, our children are the last persons in the world who ought to witness things so exceedingly degrading and exceptionable. If I do a wrong thing, let any body in the world see it rather than my children. I solemnly charge myself to conduct before them in the most careful and guarded manner; nor do I ever feel myself in a more responsible situation than when seated at my fire-side with my numerous family around me; I consider every child I have as a censor on my conduct, and charge myself to walk circumspectly, not as a fool but as wise, since the days are evil. O parents, let us all so conduct, on all occasions, but more particularly when our children are spectators, that we may conciliate their affection, approve ourselves to their better judgment, and finally be instrumental in saving their souls! Which may the Lord grant for the Redeemer's sake. AMEN.

SERMON IX.

SINNERS ENTREATED TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD.

II. Corinthians, V, 20.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

ARDUOUS, important, and difficult indeed, my brethren, is their employment, who have taken upon them the office of the christian ministry; and with diligence, assiduity and zeal, ought the duties of this holy office to be performed. The office of the christian ministry is one of the most highly responsible ever committed to poor, frail, and erring man; because conversant in matters of such awful weight and moment. Its object is nothing less than negociating a treaty of peace, and eternal friendship, betwixt a justly offended God on the one hand, and poor, offending, guilty sinners, on the other. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God."

These are the words of St. Paul addressed to

the christian church at Corinth, importing the solemn earnestness with which christian ministers are to entreat sinners to be reconciled to God. They are to take the very place of Christ himself, and urge this sacred suit.

The proper idea of an ambassador is an officer of government sent by one king or sovereign state to another, to negociate the affairs of empire, on behalf of the king or sovereign state that sent him. Whatever business this officer of government transacts, fairly within the limits of his orders, is considered as the act of the government, or at all events, does not fail to be confirmed by civilized governments. Be it observed, however, that he has his particular orders from his government; by these he must strictly abide, and not transcend them. A plenipotentiary is an officer of government of similar import; with this difference, however; he is not limited by such particular orders as the mere ambassador is; but is vested with a discretionary power, to make such treaty or negociation with the foreign state as he may see proper, without being limited by particular orders. This fulness of power his very title imports; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," saith the Apostle, "as though God did beseech you by us," &c. But we are ambassadors only; we are not plenipotentiaries, we have no discretionary power to make such treaty or negociation as we may see proper with sinners. We are tied down to particular terms from which we must not depart but at our own hazard. It is our duty who are ambassadors for Christ, to state to

sinners as lucidly as possible, the terms on which our royal master will be reconciled; and to press their acceptance of those terms, with all the earnestness and pathos, of which we are capable; but we must not alter, curtail, nor abridge them, nor add a single term of our own devising. The sum of these terms is expressly specified in the commission we have from our divine master; "Go ye out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned;" Mark xvi, 16. Now, when we hear of an order of men being sent out by the Almighty God, whose duty it shall be *ex-officio*, to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, we are at once impressed with a two-fold idea, that there exists a controversy betwixt God and sinners; and that God on his part is ever willing to be reconciled to sinners, on their coming to the terms that are reasonable, and of his own devising.

I. I Propose to prove that there exists a dreadful controversy betwixt God and sinners, that is, that God is angry at, anddispleased with, sinners; and that sinners are at enmity with, and opposed to, God.

II. That God is ever willing to be reconciled to sinners, even the chief of sinners, on their complying with the terms that are reasonable, and of his prescription.

III. I will state the terms on which, and on which exclusively, he will be reconciled, and then conclude by discharging the embassy

committed to me, and beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God.

I. Then, I am to prove that there exists a mighty controversy betwixt God and sinners, that is, that God is angry at, and displeased with, sinners, and that sinners are at enmity with, and opposed to, God.

These things I design to show from the holy scriptures and from matter of fact. To this point see the prophecy of Hosea, iv, 1—3, inclusive; "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel; for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth unto blood; therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish." Now, sirs, here is a plain proof that God is angry at, and displeased with, sinners, and not only so, but the reason of that displeasure is also plainly stated; that there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; moral obligation was not felt, and moral duties were not exercised. The greatest profligacy and moral turpitude prevailed, and therefore God was angry, and justly angry; swearing, lying, killing, stealing and committing adultery all prevailed; is it any wonder then, that God was displeased? Surely then, this passage is full to our point, which was to prove that God has a controversy with sinners. Yea, the passage not only proves the point, but goes farther and shows the ground of the

controversy; and a just and righteous ground all must grant it is. Compare Micah, vi, 2; "Hear, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel;" Gen. iii, 16—19, inclusive; "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall reign over thee; and to Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Now, sirs, is this the language of pleasure or displeasure? That the Deity has had regard to this threatening in his treatment, both of the female and the male, in every age and every country from that day to this, there is the most plenary evidence. Is there a mother in this assembly that is not a living witness of the infliction of the threatening under consideration, and of its verification? Mothers! you know, you painfully know. Is there a husbandman here, who does not bear witness with his wife to the truth of this threatening? Let him say when he comes in from the field, drenched from head to foot with perspiration, under all the beaming

ardors of a July sun, whether or not God has cursed the ground for his sake, and of consequence whether or not God has a controversy with sinners. Thus plain are the scriptures on this subject.

We now proceed to prove that God has a controversy with sinners from his conduct as well as from his word. Here, sirs, permit me to conduct you back to the days of Noah, and to the antideluvian world. See the almighty God displeased with this wicked and ungodly generation, till he comes to the resolution of destroying the whole human race, Noah and his family alone excepted. Hear the angry and insulted Deity declare to Noah his resolution; and order him to build an ark of certain dimensions for the safety of himself and family, and the different kinds of animals, clean and unclean, which he was ordered to take with him into the ark, that seed might be preserved alive Noah believed God, as all men ought to do, and as every good man will do, and went to work on this immense vessel, on which he worked for the space of one hundred and twenty years, that the ungodly world might have long and fair warning. I think I see the wags of the day passing by, and pointing the finger by way of scorn; cursing the old dotard and enquiring why he was spending so much time on such a huge vessel, and in a part of the country too, where there was no suitable water on which it might float. However, things went on. These wicked men scorned and jeered and Noah built his ark. In God's appointed time the ark was finished. The windows of Heaven were opened; the rains descended, but not in

common fructifying showers to fertilise the lap of nature for the benefit of man, but in alarming cataracts for forty days and forty nights together; the fountains of the great deep were broken up; the waters prevailed; the vallies were covered. Ah, see the paleness, the dreadful paleness, now depicted on every countenance! Oh the dire alarm! Where their sneers and cursing now? See, see how the waters enter their houses; see the inhabitants leave their long beloved homes and betake themselves with speed and alarm to the rising grounds! See the proud and boisterous waves pursue! Oh hear the heart-rending shrieks of the women and children as they fly, but find no shelter! The gently rising grounds and common hills afford none from the mighty waters; they are covered too. See these justly alarmed people betake themselves to the lofty and majestic mountains, as their dernier resort. Ah, see the wives clinging to the stronger husbands for support as they ascend, and the children to the parents. Oh the horrid uproar! Hark the yells and screams that rend the very Heavens as they fly! But alas! Alas! The very loftiest mountains afford no relief; the haughty boisterous billows, energised by divine commission, pursue them still; till they prevail over the tops of the highest mountains, and the whole human race are swept off in one watery ruin, Noah and his family excepted, who, safely shut up in the ark by the Lord himself defy the tempest's rage and smile even at the universal deluge. Oh! my brethren, how good to trust the Lord! How dangerous to offend! Now, does it not

appear from the conduct of Deity as well as from his word, that he had a controversy with sinners?

Again, take a turn with me through the medium of divine revelation, to the cities of the plain; let us contemplate for a moment the smoking ruins of these once flourishing cities, and be convinced of God's controversy with sinners. These ungodly cities indulged, and continued to indulge, notwithstanding all the warnings they received, in crimes most foul and horrible, till God was so provoked, that he determined their utter extirpation, with the exception of Lot and part of his family. See the clouds again collect at the divine command, and discharge their devouring contents of fire and brimstone See these devoted cities in sulphureous blaze, and their guilty inhabitants consumed. See, O see, how dolefully their ruins smoke! Again, let us repair to the camp of Israel, and see the displeasure of the Lord manifested against Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company, by causing the earth to open her mouth and swallow them all alive. Does not this prove that the Lord hath a controversy with sinners? Should infidels object to the instances adduced because selected from the sacred records, then let that abused book lie aside for a time, while I turn your attention to matters of fact, which even the foul and uneven mouth of infidelity itself will not deny. The infidel pretends he cannot believe that the earth would open her mouth and swallow Corah Dathan and Abiram, at the divine command, or that the Deity would issue any such barbarous mandate. Permit me to ask such objector

if he can believe she opened her mouth, on All-saints day in the year of our Lord 1755, and swallowed more than half the populous city of Lisbon, metropolis of Portugal? To this lamentable piece of history, infidelity does not object. Why? Because Mr. Martimer, Hume, or Smollet has told him so; but he cannot believe the history relating the destruction of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram. Why? Because Moses the man of God wrote it. Suffice this once for all as a specimen of an infidel's candour. He cannot believe that God would send showers of fire and brimstone from the incensed and angry heavens and destroy the cities of the plain; but he can believe as fast as I can that he will cause Mount Etna to open its jaws and belch up fire, flame, coals, melted minerals and lava, sufficient to lay waste the country for thirty, and some say a hundred, miles round; another notable instance of the fairness of an infidel's faith. O but saith the infidel, there is nothing harsh, cruel, and vindictive in this, such as appears in the scriptural account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? Why? Because this is according to the laws of nature, and the other, if true, was a direct and immediate act of Deity himself. And pray, my sapient sir, what are these laws of nature? Are they something different from the operations of an invisible agent? And if they be, what are they? Are they something independent of, and superior to, God? If so, then the Lord is not God; because this dame nature is more powerful and far beyond his control. I do not object to talking about the laws

of nature; I use this language too sometimes in conformity to common custom. But I think I understand myself, and can tell in a moment what I mean; and be assured, sirs, I do not mean something different from, and far superior to, the agency of God. If, then, I be correct, the desolations occasioned by the eruptions of Mount Etna or Vesuvius, will prove just as clearly, the controversy of God with sinners, as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by showers of fire and brimstone from heaven will, even if the infidel would allow that piece of scriptural history to be true.

What do all our aches, and pains, and sicknesses, and fevers, and death itself in the end prove, but that God hath a controversy with sinners? and this is what we set out to prove. But, sirs, this controversy is reciprocal. Sinners too, however unreasonable, have a controversy with their God! that is, they are at enmity with, and opposed to, God. This, too, we propose to prove, and shall pursue the same course as before, from scripture and reason, and fact. Let us first enquire into the bearings of sacred writ on this dreadful point; Rom. v, 10; "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life;" Phil. iii, 18; "For many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are enemies of the cross of Christ;" Col. i, 21; "But ye who sometime were alienated and enemies in your minds, by wicked works; yet now hath he reconciled."

These scriptures appear to me to bear fairly on the subject, and to prove the point beyond any reasonable doubt. But see to this point stronger language still, if stronger can be; Rom. viii, 7; "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." That men are at enmity with God is evident from their infractions of his laws. How do sinners make void the righteous and holy laws of God? How do they break his bands asunder and cast his cords from them with impious contempt? Hear that profane swearer, how impiously and wantonly does he blaspheme the holy name of the ever blessed God, and insult him to his very face. Now, on what other principles can this unreasonable conduct be accounted for, but direct enmity of heart against God? What apology can be offered for such unjustifiable language? Present your excuses, profane sinner, and let us put them to the trial of correct and illuminated reason. The testimony of God's word we must all know. That assures us, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;" Exodus, xx, 7. One profane swearer pleads by way of excuse, that he does not swear profanely in his general conversation; he swears only on occasions of high excitement. He receives an insult, and then he must let out a little profanely. Now, sirs, ought not any man of common rationality to blush to offer such an apology for profanity as this? If an ill disposed man insults you, is that a good reason why you should insult your God, your preserver, your best benefactor? How

would this do applied to your fellow men? A insults you; B is your fast and affectionate friend, who never used you ill in his life; now is the insult you received from A, however aggravated and provoking, a good reason why you should abuse and batter the person of B, or in any wise insult him? I leave this reasonable question with you, O sinner; look it in the face, and answer it to your conscience and your God.

Another swearer presents the following apology: He means no harm to God or man when he swears, his profanity are mere words of habit, and he has been so long in the practice of profane language that the words are out and gone before he knows. This is not matter of truth, and thus we plainly prove it: When this man is called into a court of justice before a judge of good standing and dignified character, you may hear him talk for the space of an hour at a time, without a single profane word; this, then, shows he can refrain from profanity as well as other men when he thinks proper and chooses to do so. What matter of regret that the individual whose character and office awes the profane man himself into modesty in the court-house, and lays an effectual restraint on his licentious language for the time, should join him in all the vileness of profanity in the tavern or on the square, and even become his teacher in the dialect of darkness. If there be no judges in our country, with respect to whom the above remark is too true, I hope they will excuse, in their goodness, this well intended though plain reproof; but if there be any such, I hope they

will be so far from being offended with the plainness of my observations, that they will take their own conduct into serious consideration, and henceforward furnish us with a more edifying and correct example.

Profane men need not indulge in profanity with an expectation of thereby acquiring higher credit to their assertions. In this they will never succeed with men of correct reflection. If a man is not believed in what he asserts on his bare word, he will scarcely acquire higher credit by attempting to confirm his assertions with profane oaths. There is great propriety in the observation of Mr. Addison, that great refiner of English language and manners, touching his view of the subject in his address to the ladies.

"Trust not our sex too far, we are by nature
False, fickle, and uncertain;
When a man talks of love, trust with caution,
But if he swears, he'll certainly deceive you"

That mankind are at enmity with God is evident from their neglect and contempt of his worship. How manifestly is the worship of God neglected, in almost every part of the country with which we are acquainted? Is there one third of the people within convenient distance of this place here this day, or is there that proportion here generally; even on the day hallowed by the Deity himself, and set apart for his peculiar worship? I presume, sirs, a negative must be put on this question, and if so, then God's worship is neglected by a large majority of this place and vicinity. Nor is this the only and solitary place where this

is the case; it is as much the case in various parts of the country as here. But, sirs, God's sacred worship is not only treated with neglect by a great part of mankind, but also, with sneer, and the most marked contempt. This certainly goes plainly to show, that the hearts of sinners are enmity against God.

That abhorrence of God's cause which so many of mankind feel, goes plainly to show that sinners have a controversy with God, and that their hearts are in a state of direct opposition to him.

II. I am to show that God is willing to be reconciled to sinners, even the chief of sinners, on their compliance with his terms. The truth of this proposition is plainly demonstrable, both from the word of God and his conduct; Ezekiel, xxxiii, 11; "Say unto them as I live saith the Lord God, I have no delight in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked man turn and live; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" Mark, xvi, 16; "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." Here I need not multiply quotations; the whole tenor of both Old and New Testaments go evidently to this point; and are as express as they can be. But this same truth is evident from the conduct of the Deity, in waiting on sinners and not cutting them off in their sins. How long since might he have cut you off in your sins, my dear friends, and have consigned you to the shades of everlasting woe? How long has he waited on you, O sinner, and given you opportunity and space for repentance? Twenty years perhaps, with respect to

some, or perhaps thirty or forty. Can there be any doubt, then, whether or not God is willing to be reconciled?

2. Is not God's willingness to be reconciled manifest from all the advances he has made toward a reconciliation? From giving us a revelation of his will, and the many pressing and solemn calls which he has given us to repentance and salvation in his sacred word? Do we not in that sacred book receive line upon line, and precept upon precept, one call succeeding another to turn from our sins and live? From his parting with Jesus Christ, and sending him into the world on the generous errand of man's salvation, "He has not withheld his son, but delivered him up to the death for us all, and shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii, 32. Now, sirs, would it not be absurd in the extreme, to suppose that the Deity would go all these lengths toward a reconciliation, and still not be willing on his part to be reconciled when the sinner is willing to come to his terms? "But has not God so loved the world that he has given his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

III. I am to state the terms on which, and on which only, God will ever be at peace with sinners.

1. Then, God requires absolute submission on the part of the sinner, and the cordial forsaking of all his sins. He must come to God, and take all the blame and shame of this controversy, otherwise God will never meet with him in mercy. To

this point see the following passages of sacred writ; Isaiah, lv, 7; "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thought; and let him return to the Lord who will have mercy upon him, and to our God who will abundantly pardon;" Jer. xii, 13; "Go and proclaim these words toward the North, and say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever; only acknowledge thine iniquities, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God;" Mal. iii, 7; "Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts;" I. John, i, 9; "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" compare Isa. xlviii, 22; "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." In a word, sirs, the whole tenor of sacred writ requires that we submit, ground our arms, and confess our fault in having a controversy with God; of which the passages quoted above are a fair and ample instance. The fact is this; God will make no division of the blame with the sinner, and for this good reason, that he has no share in the fault. This controversy between God and the sinner is not like the greater part of the controversies which I have known to exist between my fellow men. Very few controversies have existed amongst mankind in the circle of my acquaintance, but what there have been faults on both sides before they have progressed far, and often have I thought the parties contending might, with much

propriety, have met on middle ground made mutual concessions, exchanged forgivenesses, and been friends. Not so in this controversy. Here the fault is entirely on one side, and thence must come all the concessions. Suppose, for illustration here, that a father had brought up his son in the most tender, obliging and affectionate manner that a father ever did, had educated him in the highest degree that the country and his own circumstances afforded, and withal, had supplied and even prevented his wants, and after all this generous and parental kindness, this son, when he arrived at years of maturity, instead of ministering to the comfort of his father, and smoothing the wrinkles of his solicitude and care, should rebel against the father's rightful authority, endeavor to relax the bonds of moral obligation on the minds of the minor members of the family; suppose he should insult his father in the grossest manner, and go so far as even to assault, and beat his person? The indulgent father would certainly find it necessary at length to disinherit this ungrateful and rebellious son. Suppose, now, some well disposed third person, feeling for the honour of the family, should propose a reconciliation betwixt this father and son? I ask, what are the terms that would be reasonable? Must this father propose to the son that they should meet on middle ground, make mutual concessions, exchange forgivenesses and be friends? Shall this correct and upright father, in order to a reconciliation, make concessions to the son whom he had never wronged? Shall he thus depart from the dignity of a father, and be guilty of a

most solemn lie in fact, in order to regain to his family a profligate and rebellious son? All that is correct within us revolts at the idea. I think this father might, without acting out of character, propose to the son a reconciliation on terms that are reasonable; but those reasonable terms certainly must be, that the son shall make the most humiliating concessions, with the most ample promises of amendment. This good father must make no concessions, because he has done no wrong. Apply these observations to the case before us, and that application is easy. God is this tender father; we sinners of the human family are this rebellious son; see Isaiah, i, from the 1st to the 5th vorse, inclusive.

2. Another part of the terms is sincere and unfeigned repentance, for having rebelled against the Lord; Joel, ii, 12, 13; "Therefore also now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and turn with fasting, and with weeping and with mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments." These words contain part of the terms on which the Lord will be reconciled to offending sinners; and that this part of the terms is so absolutely necessary, that it will never be dispensed with, is manifest from our Saviour's words; Luke, xiii, 3; "I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

3. Another part of the terms required is, faith in Jesus Christ; I. John, iii, 23; "This is the commandment of God, that ye believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another;" Mark, xvi, 16; "He that believeth and is

baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned; John, iii, 36: "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Now, sirs, this faith is an exercise of the heart; Rom. x, 10; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Here, sinners, are the terms, and the only terms, on which God will ever be reconciled. It only remains now, that I, as the ambassador of Christ, discharge the embassy committed to me in the providence of God, by beseeching you to be reconciled on your part. For you too must be reconciled to God, as well as he to you, or you never can be happy. But, whenever you are reconciled in your hearts to God and submit to take all the shame and blame of the controversy, then God will be reconciled to you.

1. To this I beseech you by the reasonableness of the case. You are the aggressors, and the only aggressors, in this controversy. Now, I think, when a controversy exists and the blame is fairly chargeable on one of the parties, but not on the other, the party offending ought, in all reason, to make the concessions; and, sirs, this is the common sense and the common feeling of mankind on this subject of offences. Hence have originated so many challenges to single combat. The man, feeling himself, as he views the matter, insulted and offended, demands concessions, that his injured honor may be repaired. Not receiving the concessions which he thinks he ought to receive, he proceeds to a challenge. Let none imagine because I make

these observations, I am coming forward as an apologist for duelling. God forbid! Nay, rather let the tongue that addresses you be palsied, than employed in pleading so wicked a cause, and one so superlatively base! A crime that still exists amongst us, notwithstanding all our advances in civilization and enlightened politics, to the injury of our country, and to the degradation of our otherwise patriotic and distinguished nation. Who can recollect the fall of a Hamilton and a Decatur, and not feel indignant that such a crime should find so many advocates, and that, too, amongst our leading men? But notwithstanding I can never justify the guilty lengths to which some men go in exacting concessions in case of offences received, yet, I must still insist, that concessions on the part of offenders are reasonable; and on this ground, you and I ought to make the most ample confessions to our God, and implore his pardon and forgiveness, as we have transgressed his laws and offended against him.

Again, is it not perfectly reasonable, that we should ground the arms of our impious rebellion, submit to our God, and do his pleasure, when we reflect on the relation he sustains to us, as our creator, preserver, and benefactor? How sacred do we all view the obligations under which children are to their parents? Is not the son under reasonable obligations to reverence his father and love him more than other men? And is not this the general sense of society? Now, if the question be asked why, do we not all agree in the answer; and is not the answer we give, the

right one, that the father is the instrumental cause of his existence, and of course, that the relation he sustains to him is much nearear than he sustains or can sustain to any other man. But, brethren, is not God our father in heaven? Does he not sustain to us a nearer relation than the father we acknowledge on earth, since our earthly father is only the instrumental cause of our existence; whereas, God is the prime and efficient cause? Of course, I presume we ought to love him more, seeing our relation to him is nearer and our obligation stronger. Who would not be shocked to the highest degree to hear the son abusing and railing at his father, or to see him beating his person? And who ought not to be more shocked still, to hear the guilty sinner blaspheming his God, profaning his name, and violating his laws? Consider this, ye guilty and profane, and insult your God no more. Your crimes are inconceivably aggravated; and your punishment, if you remain impenitent, must be as inconceivably dreadful. As a preserver and benefactor, you are under solemn obligations to the Almighty God. Realise them and conduct agreeably to your solemn obligations. Thus we discharge our sacred embassy; thus do we beseech you to be reconciled to God. But again; is not the Lord the most consummately excellent character in the universe, and as such, worthy of your affection? I presume it is a dictate of right reason, that the object which is lovely ought to be loved for its loveliness and excellence, and that in proportion to the quanity of the same; but God is possessed of supreme excellence and worth;

therefore God ought to be loved with supreme affection.

2. I beseech you to be reconciled to God, because you will be eternally ruined if you remain his enemy; "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" The Almighty God is the avenger of sin. None can rescue from his hand. The storms of his vengeance will be eternal if you continue to oppose him. Your personal safety then requires your submission. Can you think of lying down in everlasting ruin, or of dwelling with devouring fire? O sinners, consider the dreadful storms of divine vengeance which await all in your situation, and flee from the wrath to come. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" Heb. x, 31.

3. I beseech you, sinners, by the mercy of the king, his readiness to forgive, and the certainty of acceptance with him, if you return to his service and cause. Will not He, who shed his precious blood for us, and on our behalf endured all the tragical scene of Mount Calvary, forgive us if we return? We confidently believe he will.

4. I beseech you, by the consolations of religion, when you come to die, and the awful terrors which await a dying bed without it. We are all aware, it is appointed for men once to die; and the most thoughtless of us do not expect to escape the call of this last messenger; but alas! my friends, who amongst us is giving due diligence to make his last end safe and happy? How dignified is the end of the sincere christian who is

supported by conscious virtue and a lively hope in the gospel of grace. By this divine consolation then which awaits the last end of the humble christian, I beseech you to be reconciled to God; "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; the end of that man is peace!" Psalm, xxxvii, 37. But O the end, the fearful end, of the sinner! My mind recoils at the dreadful apprehension, and I shudder while I approach the bed on which he expires. Despair is depicted on his haggard countenance, while his feeble, faultering tongue attempts a description of the ineffable torture he feels within. Poor distracted sinner! He looks back with agony on a life spent in transgression. He is haunted by the ghosts of murdered hours. When he looks upward he sees nothing for his consolation. The thoughts of an angry God, a fiery flaming tribunal, and a most solemn reckoning, in which he looks for nothing better than a sentence of condemnation, administer no comfort to his disconsolate mind. His awful reflections on these subjects aggravate his torments and drink up his spirits. Thus he lies, breathing out his life, quite unwilling to die yet utterly unable to live.

"In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
"Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
"Runs to each avenue and shrieks for help,
"But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
"On all she's leaving, now no longer her's.
"A little longer; yet a little longer,
"O might she stay; to wash away her stains,
"And fit her for the passage; mournful sight!
"Her eyes weep very blood. But the foe,
"Like a staunch murd'rer, steady to his purpose,
"Pursues her close, through every lane of life;

"Nor misses once the track, but presses on,
"Till forc'd at last, to the tremendous verge,
"At once she sinks———"

Poem on the Grave—BLAIR.

5. I beseech you, sinners, to be reconciled to God by the joys of heaven; by the everlasting blessedness of that celestial place. There, O sinner, should you obtain a place, you will sin no more; you shall be holy as Gabriel. No corrupt, deceitful heart there; no coldness of affection; you shall love your God intensely forever; no tempting devil; there shall you bow before the celestial throne, and pay the honors that are due in heaven. No distress, nor suffering of any kind shall molest you there; "Every tear shall be wiped from every eye;" Rev. xxi, 4. Pain, suffering, and sickness, shall be barred forever from that celestial place; there, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick;" Isaiah, xxxiii, 24. Nothing shall interrupt the peace and love of that celestial state forever. By all this peace, these joys and privileges, I entreat and beseech you to be reconciled to God. Finally, I beseech you by the love, the wounds, the sufferings and death of your blessed Saviour. Has he loved you from eternity, and will you be his enemy? Can you think of remaining any longer in a state of rebellion against Him who came, induced by his own love and mercy, to redeem your precious souls? See this blessed Jesus nailed to the cross for poor helpless sinners. O! how does he languish, and suffer, and bleed, and that too, for sinners when they were his enemies. Hear, O sinner, his prayer, his compassionate

prayer on the cross; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Luke, xxiii, 34. Was this the compassion manifested by your blessed Saviour, sinners; and will you still cry on your part, away with this fellow from the earth? O! are you capable of such ingratitude as this? Consider, I beseech you, all he suffered, and all he did, and be ye reconciled to God. AMEN.

SERMON X.

THE GOSPEL THE GREAT PROMOTER OF PEACE AND GOOD WILL IN SOCIETY.

PREACHED ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

Luke, II, 14.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

THESE are the words which were chanted to the praise of God, by the angelic bands at the advent of Jesus Christ to our world. How careless soever you and I and other sinners may be respecting this signal event, be assured the angelic bands were not listless spectators of so interesting a scene. An angel announced the advent of the Redeemer, a band of these celestial spirits hailed that advent in the language of my text. Angels ministered to him in the days of his incarnation. An angel succoured him when agonising in the garden of Gethsemane, and an angel rolled the rock away at his resurrection. Angels no doubt hovered around the bloody tree at his crucifixion, and angels escorted him in his triumphal ascent to the courts of glory. With respect to the connection of these words, I remarked so fully on a late

occasion in the introduction of a discourse on the 9th and 10th verses of this same chapter, that I shall wave a farther formal introduction at present, and proceed to make a few appropriate remarks on each note of this angelic song; in doing this, I shall show;

I. How the event here celebrated operates to the promotion of the divine glory.

II. How it promotes peace on earth.

III. How it evinces the divine benevolence, and then conclude with some inferences and application.

1. I am to show how the event here celebrated goes to promote the divine glory. By the glory of God I mean a display of the divine perfections to the view of his reasonable creatures, and also, a proper celebration of the divine praises. If, then, the event here celebrated gives occasion for the divine praises to be sung, and if it displays eminently the divine perfections to the view of reasonable creatures, then it may be said to promote the glory of God; otherwise it does not. That it gave occasion for the praises of God to be sung by the angelic hosts is sufficiently manifest from the words of my text and their connection; and in this holy and devout exercise, they have been joined by thousands upon thousands of the human race from that day to this. Does not the event celebrated in this angelic song also display the divine perfections in the most illustrious manner, and to the highest possible advantage? When we speak of the Saviour's birth displaying the divine perfections to the highest degree, we

include also his life, death, and resurrection; yea, all he did and all he suffered, as well as the single circumstance of his being born. In his holy and innocent life how is the law of God, that transcript of his moral perfections, magnified and honoured? Where else have we seen the law of God obeyed to perfection? Where else have we seen what a perfectly sinless obedience is? I answer, no where. But, sirs, is it not in the death and sufferings of your holy Saviour, whose birth is celebrated in my text, and in the atonement he has made, that the perfections of Deity are most illustriously displayed. Here it is "That mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" Psalm lxxxv, 10. In what other way, permit me to ask, might the eternal God have proceeded with sinners in which he would have been so signally glorified? Had he saved them without an atonement, mercy might have triumphed, but justice must have suffered? Had he sent all transgressors to a deserved hell without redemption, justice might have been glorified in their condemnation, but mercy, that lovely perfection, must have been forever unknown. But in the scheme of salvation through Christ, mercy is exalted and justice is displayed, while truth and righteousness, and every perfection, conspicuously shine. Now, if God's glory consists in the display of his perfections, then, surely, whatever displays the divine perfections most must glorify God most. Does not, then, the interesting event celebrated in my text, by angelic song, most signally glorify God?

II. I am to show how the event celebrated in this song goes to promote peace on earth. This great desideratum it effects in sundry ways. No doubt one important idea couched in this note of the angel's song is, that thereby the middle wall of partition betwixt Jew and Gentile is broken down, and those hitherto jarring parties reconciled to each other; Ephes. ii, 14, 15. Peace might well be said to be promoted by this event, seeing he was now born who came to set the most exalted example of peace which the world ever saw. Pursue this meek and gentle Redeemer from his cradle to his grave, and what infraction of the strictest rules of peace will you find in all his conduct? And what singular care will you see he always took to avoid giving offence? Witness the case of the tribute money; Mat. xvii, 24, to the end. Witness his conduct when ungenerously betrayed into the hands of his enemies; Mat. xxvi, 47—54, inclusive. Witness above all his prayer for his enemies on the cross; "Father forgive them for they know not what they do!" Luke xxiii, 34. How did all his conduct show that he came to exemplify peace. Hear the apostle's testimony respecting him, "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." But well might the angels sing peace on earth when he was born who came to enjoin peace on human kind by the most express and positive precepts of peace; "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another;" Mark. ix. 50; "And to guide our feet in the

way of peace;" Luke, i, 79. But again, might not the angels well sing peace, when he was born who came to teach a religion, all whose precepts, when reduced to practice, manifestly make for peace? Are not all the precepts of Christ's religion such as make for peace? Let us examine a few of them a little. Love to our fellow men is a prominent feature and a leading precept in that divine religion taught us by Jesus Christ; John xiii, 34, 35; "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, so also that ye love one another: by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, when ye have love one to another." But does not love go greatly to promote peace? How backward are we to have any feuds, animosities, or contentions, with those whom we love? Mat. v, 43, to the end. Another precept of this divine teacher which goes to make much for peace is, strict, impartial justice towards all our fellow men with whom we come into commercial contact; "All things therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets;" Mat. vii, 12. Who is there, possessed of common sense and common observation, that needs to be informed that the strict observation of this precept, goes to make greatly for peace. What, I beseech you, is more calculated to generate strifes, than keeping men out of their honest and hard earned wages? Another precept of Christ's religion which makes much for peace is, keeping a good tongue; and avoiding all railing, provoking, and insulting language; Mat. v, 37; "Let your

communications be yea, yea, and nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." How much would a strict observation of this precept make for peace; and how direful in society are the consequences of an unruly, unbridled, and licentious tongue? "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" James, iii, 5. How carefully ought all to set a guard on their lips and their tongues who would maintain the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace? A rash and unadvised word, having once escaped the lips, often does a world of mischief. But the Saviour, whose birth is celebrated in my text, came to teach the great and necessary lesson of bridling our tongues. Well, then, might the angels sing on the auspicious occasion of his birth, "Peace on earth."

No serious objection can lie against this statement from the abuse of wicked men. Peace will prevail so far as the religion of Jesus Christ prevails, and its precepts are complied with. Wicked men may abuse even this holy thing, and do abuse it, and of this there is no question. And pray, sirs, what may they not abuse? We have known a number of men kill themselves by eating bread, and meat, and other viands; and still I cannot help thinking, that bread and meat are quite convenient things for the sustenance of man. But some are ready to plead that the very ministers are far from manifesting that peaceful disposition here plead for; that they discover spleen, pride and rancour, and appear cross-hearted in their theological debates. So far as they are guilty of what this objection states, they are wrong and no man

need attempt to justify their conduct. The attempt would prove abortive. It never can be done. But is christianity the worse for this? Or is it the worse for the malconduct of its professed friends? Let us recollect that ministers are men, and possess like passions with others. The best of them no doubt have their imperfections; and numbers, induced by vanity, show, and vain glory, have entered into holy orders who have no religion at all. These will do mischief in the sacred vineyard; but all this does not prove that the religion of Jesus Christ is not a divine and peaceful religion. It is, to be sure, matter of extreme regret, that so many worldly minded, proud, selfish and wicked men, have wrought themselves into holy orders. They are a dead weight on the church of God, and have done it great injury: but let not my sincere and humble christian brethren despond. Truth is mighty and will prevail; and notwithstanding all these drawbacks, christianity has done more to bless the nations, and promote human happiness, than all things else put together. For the satisfaction of the reflecting and intelligent on this subject, I need only refer them to the present state of nations which have lately embraced this holy religion, contrasted with their late condition. For example, Otaheite, Eimeo and other places. I think, however, on the whole, that the injudicious conduct and the angry debates and embittered spirit of many preachers, ought to make us, whose business it is to induct men into holy orders exceedingly careful how we lay hands on careless and empty men. The apparent zeal of many

ministers in insisting on men entering the ministry even in many instances without their own seeking, has done much injury to the general cause. If young men really possess that genuine and unfeigned piety which will justify their entering the sacred office, they will get at it no doubt in due season, without being insisted on and dragged into these holy engagements. I am perhaps as much aware as other men, that it is a desideratum to have many more faithful, true-hearted, disinterested ministers in the church of God in our country where so many people are perishing for lack of knowledge; but still I think much more caution ought to be exercised in their induction than is often done; and for my part, I would rather see even but one in a whole country provided he were really a pious, enlightened, peaceable and evangelical man, than to see a dozen upstart, bitter spirited, ignorant, foppish, conceited things, concerned in this holy cause, frisking about on public occasions, exposing themselves, and either offending or misleading others.

"In man or woman, but far most in man,
"And most of all in man that ministers
"And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe
"All affectation."

COWPER.

III. I am to show how the event celebrated in this angelic song evinces the divine benevolence. What, permit me to ask, could evince it more? The son of God himself incarnate! Must not this event exceedingly display the divine benevolence, when we consider the dignity and exaltation of

the person now born; the purpose for which he was born; the means by which he was to accomplish this godlike purpose; and the condition of the persons, to befriend whom he came? Who is this that is born? Whose birth do the angel's celebrate? Who is this babe of Bethlehem? Whom see I swathed and laid in the manger? "The mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace;" Isaiah, ix, 6; see also, verse 10th of this chapter; "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." I shall not remark farther on the manifest evidence of the Saviour's divinity at present, as I have done that so fully on a late occasion in my sermon on the 10th and 11th verses of this chapter. But certainly, the birth of such a person is one of the highest and most unequivocal proofs of the divine benevolence, and the more especially, when we take into consideration the purpose for which he was born. Was it not for the express purpose of saving sinners? "For the son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost;" Luke, xix, 10; see also, John, iii, 17; "For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved;" see also, I. Tim. i, 15; "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Then it is quite manifest that the express purpose for which the Saviour came was to save sinners. O how does this display the divine benevolence that the eternal God should be born into our world for the

purpose of saving sinners! This salvation of sinners consists in delivering them from sin and hell, and in making them holy, and bringing them to heaven. To effect these divine purposes was the blessed Saviour born How does this display the divine benevolence? What were the means by which the blessed Jesus was to accomplish this godlike purpose? Let us examine the subject a little, and at each step let higher wonder rise! Were not these means his obedience, his sufferings, his death? Isaiah, liii, 4—6; "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed;" John, x, 11; "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." To redeem poor sinners from hell cost the blessed Saviour all the tragical scene of Mount Calvary. But who were they and what was their condition whom the Saviour came to save? Sinners; Mat. ix, 13; "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" chief of sinners; I. Tim. i, 15; sinners of the deepest dye, up in arms against the government of God; a rebel world, not one exempt; sinners who had conspired against the divine throne; sinners who shed the blood of him who came to save them. How eminently does this circumstance display the benevolence of him who was born to save a lost and ruined world!

1. Learn from this subject the infinite

benevolence and wisdom of the Deity, who withheld not his own son, but sent him to save our ruined world, and that in a way which secures the dignity of the divine government and all the rights of the celestial throne. The benevolence of the Deity is displayed in giving Christ his son to die for sinners, and his wisdom in inventing that scheme of salvation wherein all the perfections of Deity are most illustriously displayed; wherein "Mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" Psalm, lxxxv, 10.

2. Learn from this subject the incomparable excellency of the gospel of Christ and its salutary influence in counteracting the angry and unruly passions of men; and in introducing harmony, love, and peace in society. The gospel of Christ has done more to meliorate the condition of society, than any thing else the world ever saw, notwithstanding all the opposition with which it has met from wicked and ungodly men. What has it done? Rather let me ask what has it not done, that has been done right? It has banished the gladiatorial shows of Rome. These shows for ages previous to the introduction of Christianity, swept off more of the population of that empire than all their wars did, wide and devastating as those wars were. For what purpose were those shows? Strange to tell! They were instituted for the entertainment of the court. What must have been the state of public morals when such shocking scenes of blood and murder could afford entertainment to what were called the better

orders of the people? And such was the public taste for these most wicked and shameful things, that it is said the ladies of that court attended and were extremely fond of them. What should you and I think of our wives and daughters if we found the most dreadful murders afford them the highest entertainment? Let us pause then and bless the author of every good and perfect gift for that invaluable gospel which has set these dreadful things aside, and introduced manners of so different a complexion as now generally prevail in christendom. The gospel has been the blessed instrument, in the hand of God, for producing so marvellous a change. No gladiatorial shows have prevailed since the gospel was preached at Rome; "Glory to God in the highest, on the earth peace, good will toward men." What has the gospel done? It has put an end to the base practice of polygamy in all countries where it has become the prevailing religion. Polygamy, that most unreasonable, injurious, and wicked practice, exists no longer in christendom. Unreasonable because it contradicts the design of the all wise Creator, as intelligibly expressed by the due proportion of the sexes so plainly kept up in every age, and in every country. It has been found in every part of the world from the actual census of the population, that the males born are a little more numerous than the females, the proportion being as 19 to 18. The surplus males being designed to make up for the greater number of deaths amongst them, owing to wars, more dangerous occupations, and a sea-faring life.

Does not this proportion, then, clearly set forth the divine intention, and that is, that one man shall have one wife and no more, at the same time? Therefore, the custom of polygamy is perfectly unreasonable. We said the custom is injurious. Must not this be admitted by all, when we recollect if one man has six wives there must be five men who can get none, those falling to their share being already monopolised? We said the custom is wicked; manifestly so, because it is cherishing a most impure and irregular desire, expressly forbidden in sacred writ in general, and in the seventh commandment in particular. I have said the gospel has put down polygamy in all countries where it is received. This, as far as I know, is correct. The laws on this subject are particular and safe. I am not so much of a child as to believe that there are no licentious men, who repeatedly violate the law of God with respect to sexual intercourse; but I do not know any man that has six, eight, or ten wives kept openly and aboveboard. Licentious men cannot, in this country, where the gospel has introduced so many wholesome regulations thus indulge, but I am sorry to be necessitated to add that many are seeking a substitute for polygamy in another way, and that by the aid of state legislatures; and it is still with greater regret, I observe legislatures too often disposed to countenance and aid them in their nefarious practices. Licentiousness appears to have arrived at that pass amongst us, at least in some of the states, and I am extremely sorry to add our own amongst the rest, that many, on growing a

little tired of their lawful wives, apply to the legislature for a divorce, and perhaps a great deal too often succeed in obtaining it. This, it is conceded, is not quite polygamy, but if I am not out very much in my calculation, it is a near relation by consanguinity. I presume, if these things are indulged as they have been in some instances, and should continue to receive such legislative countenance as they have sometimes met with, there is no telling where the evil may stop. Perhaps scarcely on this side the prostration of all social order. Men not sufficiently under the influence of moral principle may smile and talk lightly, and act lightly about them; but to the man of sober reflection and under the influence of correct habits, they are a threatening evil, and such men tremble for the consequences unless speedily checked. I think our late legislature did themselves much credit and acted judiciously for the community in leaving the long list of petitions lately before them on this dirty subject, not granted. I do hope, for the credit of our common nature, and their own dignity, they will never revive it hereafter. How do sixty, eighty, or a hundred men, selected from the different sections of the state by the popular voice to foster and guard our dearest civil rights appear, when engaged in hearing, investigating and judging upon the dirty intrigues, licentious amours and low ill-natured contests of a parcel of impure and restless husbands and wives? Does not such conduct let them down in public estimation? What are we to think of the conduct of a legislator who will stand up, bible in hand, consuming time

and spending public money too, endeavoring to wipe off that salutary odium which public opinion has attached to this wicked practice, and doing all he can to influence his fellow members to grant the petitions of all that apply? What ought the public to think of such a member? I presume their opinion ought to be, that he shall have full and entire permission to stay at home forever hereafter and attend to his own private concerns in any honest way he may see proper, but never again be entrusted with the interests of the commonwealth. Such a degrading direliction of moral principle ought to exclude him from legislative power forever.

The gospel of Christ has banished from all countries where it has obtained, the shocking custom of offering human sacrifices. It has taught us plainly that "God is a spirit, and that they who worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth;" John, iv, 24. Human sacrifices were common almost all over the ancient heathen world, as must be known to every man of reading; nay, and in a great many parts of the modern heathen nations too. When the ship Duff arrived at the South Sea Islands about a quarter of a century ago, the missionaries found those Islanders in the practice of human sacrifices, as has been stated in letters from sundry missionaries, and also from Capt. Wilson. No such custom prevails there now, since they have happily learned what God is and how he is to be worshipped from the meek and lowly stranger whose birth is celebrated in my text. The Old Testament Scriptures, even before the incarnation of the Redeemer

inform us that "The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit;" Psalm, li, 17.

The gospel of Christ, wherever it has prevailed, has secured the proper treatment of women, which we view as one of the great things it has effected for the general good of society. I know of no nation out of Christendom where women are treated better than slaves, or where they appear to be thought entitled to any higher grade than that of mere household drudges; designed for the purpose of ministering to the convenience and sensual gratification of their lordly masters. It is in Christendom, and in Christendom only, that they are raised to that dignified and exalted standing in society, to which they are so justly entitled, and for which they appear, in the view of enlightened and liberal minded men, to have been so evidently designed. Good ladies, dearly beloved wives, mothers, and sisters! I hope you will, nay, I hope and believe that many of you do, highly estimate that invaluable gospel which has done so much to meliorate your condition. But for this, instead of being honored as you are, with the most flattering attentions and dignified standing, and instead of enjoying all that ease and freedom from hardships which the necessary care of a family will permit an affectionate matron to enjoy, you would have been sunk as thousands of your sisters of human kind still are, to the most degraded, menial, and laborious condition. If husbands in christian nations treat their wives with so superior a tenderness and respect to that which they receive in other nations, it is not because those husbands are

better by nature than men of other nations, but because they have been made acquainted with that religion which gives such precepts as the following: "Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them;" Col. iii, 19; "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it;" Eph. v, 25; "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself;" Eph. v, 28; "Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as unto the weaker vessel;" I. Peter, iii, 7. If many men in christian nations who have no real religion treat their wives as well as others, we bless God for it, and the reason is, that in this respect they happily conform to that general tone which this blessed religion has given to the morals of society wherever it has prevailed in its purity.

3. How readily ought we to embrace this precious and divine religion; and thus partake of all its benefits. It will lead us to much greater felicity and enjoyment in the present world, and it is certainly the road to the blessed mansions of eternal rest.

4. How ungrateful to the benevolent Redeemer is their conduct who live lives of guilt and profanity, and neglect the holy Saviour notwithstanding all he has done for our apostate race!

5. How unjustifiable is their conduct who devote this particular season of the year to folly and dissipation, because the christian world has taken up an opinion, without a particle of evidence, that Jesus Christ was born on the 25th of December;

and if he were, is that a good reason why they should engage in more folly and dissipation during the Christmas holidays than on half the year besides. Is it not time for enlightened society to lay such follies aside and conduct with sobriety and discretion? If the inhabitants of our country should conduct on this day as they have heretofore done on this day of the year, there will be more people drunk, and more fights and wickedness will take place, than on half a dozen of any other days in the year, not excepting even the celebrated 4th of July. How extremely incongruous is such a practice as this? It is believed, though without evidence, that the blessed Saviour was born on the 25th of December; and therefore the day is peculiarly abused. Is not not this sinning that grace may abound?

SERMON XI.

CHRIST'S LAMENTATION OVER THE IMPENITENT CITY OF JERUSALEM.

Luke, XIX, 41, 42.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

THESE words express with great pathos and tenderness, the feelings of the benevolent Saviour toward the impenitent city Jerusalem, whilst he contemplated the awful devastation which was just about to overtake it. Jesus Christ was now making his last entrance into Jerusalem, previous to his crucifixion. He had often been in the sacred temple of the Lord, in that famous city; he had contracted a large acquaintance there. There, at the age of twelve years he had confounded the doctors of the jewish law, both hearing them and asking them questions. There he had repeatedly preached righteousness to the great congregation; there he had often called the people to repentance, and pointed out to them how they might escape the wrath and vengeance of the Lord. But, alas,

so hardened were these Jerusalemites in transgression, that they rejected all his gracious counsels and drew down the vengeance of Almighty God on their own devoted souls. As the compassionate Saviour was now approaching Jerusalem for the last time, attended by a multitude who shouted his praise, when he came in sight of the city and beheld once more its glory and grandeur, while he contemplated it, and revolved in his mind the awful catastrophe which awaited it in the righteous providence of an incensed God, his benevolent heart was too full to admit of suppressing his feelings any longer, and he gave vent to them in the tender, pathetic, and highly impassioned language of my text; "hadst thou known, even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thy eyes;" as if he had said, O! unhappy Jerusalem, time was, when you might have averted, by timely repentance and reformation, the awful doom which now impends you, but despising all the calls of mercy and grace you have sealed your own destruction. It is now too late, your doom is fixed and irreversible. I foresee the Roman armies investing your city; the eagle hovering over it, with ensanguined and ill-boding talons; I see their warlike engines and battering rams beating down the walls to the ground; I see the inhabitants suffering a carnage without a parallel in the history of the world; I see your sacred and highly esteemed temple overturned by heathen soldiers, and so complete shall its demolition be, that there shall not be one stone left upon another. Nor is this all; I see

your precious souls exposed to eternal destruction for your impiety and wickedness. Repentance is hid from your eyes. Permit me to ask the Deist and unbeliever, if this prediction of the Saviour and its accomplishment do not furnish strong evidence of the truth of the christian religion? Is not here an event predicted with the most decided precision, and the most unlikely to take place? Who but the living God could have foreseen the certain existence of a future event so exceedingly improbable. Here was the strongest walled city on which the sun in all his journeyings ever shone. A city which then and at all times, kept twenty years provision within its walls. Now, what human probability was there that this city, defended as it was by a large military force, should be sacked and utterly ruined before half a century? Yet, before that short space, its ruin was effected by the Roman armies; and Turnus Rufus, a Roman general, caused the very ground on which the temple stood, to be ploughed up. The prophecy, though one of the most improbable ever uttered, was literally fulfilled in less than half a century. Jesus was divine, christianity is true, and the Bible is the book of God.

"And when he came near, and beheld the city, he wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thy eyes."

The following propositions appear fairly contained in the words of my text;

I. There are certain things, the experimental

knowledge of which is essential to the peace and eternal well-being of the human soul.

II. There is a certain limited time in which these things must be attended to or remain forever undone.

III. That there are certain seasons which occur peculiarly favourable for attending to these things.

IV. All mankind, possessing the ordinary powers of the human mind and hearing the gospel, may attend to the things that belong to their peace if they will; they may accept of Jesus Christ and receive the salvation of their souls.

V. Notwithstanding all these things, many of the human race neglect attending to religion till it is eternally too late.

VI. Sinners by rejecting the offers of mercy, and neglecting the opportunities with which they are favoured, are sometimes judicially blinded, so that they never shall attend to them.

VII. The case of such sinners is truly lamentable, and enough to extract tears from every benevolent and feeling soul.

I design to illustrate a little each of these propositions in the order in which I have mentioned them, and then conclude with some inferences and application.

1. There are certain things, the experimental knowledge of which is essential to the peace and eternal well-being of the human soul. In treating this proposition, we shall show what these things are, and prove them to be essential to our peace. Now to our point. Holiness is one of those things

essential to our peace; that it is thus essential, see Heb. 12, 14; "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Holiness consists essentially in love to God and man. Holiness on the part of an accountable creature, certainly does consist in conformity of heart and conduct to the requirements of the divine law; "Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" Mat. xxii, 37—40. This supreme love to God, and love sincere and active to our fellow men, then, according to the scriptures, is holiness. This implies regeneration by divine influence. There is no such thing as genuine and unfeigned holiness found amongst the children of men, without regeneration by the divine spirit; John, iii, 3; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." So far are mankind from loving God and man by nature, or previous to regeneration, that their hearts are the very reverse of love; Rom. viii, 7; "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." Repentance toward God is another of those things, the experimental knowledge of which is essential to the peace and well-being of the soul; Luke xiii, 3; "I tell you nay, but except you repent you shall all likewise perish." This shows repentance to be essential in the opinion of him

who never judged either rashly or erroneously; "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now he commandeth all men every where to repent;" Acts xvii, 30. Repentance is a genuine contrition and sorrow for sin; for having transgressed God's law, its direct object is sin as done against God; punishment is not its object. Repentance which is genuine, extends to sins of the heart as well as sins of the life; to the native corruption of our nature as well as our express violation of God's law in our outward conduct. Faith in Jesus Christ is another of those things of which an experimental knowledge is necessary to our peace and spiritual well being; Mark, xvi, 16; "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned;" John, iii, 36; "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This faith in Jesus Christ is an exercise of the heart, and not of the head; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" Rom. x, 10. This manifestly implies an exercise of the intellect, that is, a speculative belief of the truth of the gospel narrative. But the essence of saving faith does not consist in this speculative opinion, but in a cordial receiving and resting on Christ for salvation. In a word, the great and essential difference between the faith of a pious and godly man, and that of a wicked man, is simply this: the one believes and loves the Saviour; the other believes and hates him.

2. There is a certain limited time given in which these things must be attended to, or remain forever undone; "If thou hadst known in this thy day," says Christ in my text. This certainly imports a limited time; Mat. xx, 6; "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" This day implies a limited time, and that time is the time of their probation. Christ says, "I must work while it is called to-day; the night cometh when no man can work." Then certainly there is a limited time given in which we must do this great work, or it must remain forever undone. The particular limits of this time, as they respect the individual, are known to God only. One thing, however, we know with certainty respecting these limits, and that is, that they do not extend beyond the grave. This we know through the information God hath given us; "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest;" Eccl. ix, 10. And farther, we may observe with truth and propriety, that the limits of this period are often out long before life is out. This was the case of the Jerusalemites; see my text; with Ephraim also; Hosea, iv, 17; "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone."

3. There are certain seasons peculiarly favorable for attending to religion; "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; Eccl xii, 1. Thus, then, it would appear that the season of youth is peculiarly favorable. This is a

season which only a part of my audience have it in their power to improve. You, my dear youths, are that highly favored part. Will you be persuaded, for God's sake, and for the sake of your own precious souls, to improve this golden season? You may do it; others cannot. With regard to us, your parents and seniors, this blessed time has passed away, and probably quite unimproved by many, which is indeed a lamentable consideration. Be ye persuaded to take time by the forelock, and keep pace with it as it fleets away. The encouragement is great which the sacred records hold out to youth; "I love them that love me;" saith divine wisdom, "and they that seek me early shall find me;" Prov. viii, 17. For a variety of unanswerable reasons, this is the very best period of human existence for attending to religion. When God is pouring out his divine and blessed spirit on many around us, is a favorable time; let it not be lost when we enjoy it; when the spirit moves on our own hearts, and we feel sensibly the necessity of religion; if any of my audience enjoy this valuable season, let it not be lost; "Quench not the spirit;" I. Thess. v, 19. Beware, my friends, if you enjoy the influences of the blessed spirit, how you provoke him to withdraw, in which event your souls must be forever lost. Another season signally favorable for attending to religion, and securing our calling and election is, when we enjoy a lucid, ardent and faithful ministry. This, too, ought to be most carefully and conscientiously improved by all who are so highly favored as to enjoy it.

4. All sinners hearing the gospel of the redeemer, and possessing the ordinary powers of the human mind, may attend to religion if they will; they may accept of Jesus Christ as offered in the gospel, and receive the salvation of their souls; and if they do not, the fault is their own.

To this point witness my text; "If thou hadst known, even thou." Does not this language of the blessed Jesus plainly imply that they might have known these things if they would; if not, where lies the blame? Or are moral agents to blame for not performing things naturally impossible? "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;" John, v, 40. Here Jesus Christ complains of the Jews for not coming to him. But I ask again, where lies the blame if they could not come, being willing? All the rational answer that can be given to this question is, no where; "And the spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;" Rev. xxii, 17. Now, if the sinner is willing, on gospel terms, to take the water of life, who shall hinder him? I answer, not one in heaven, earth, or hell. God will not; men and devils cannot; "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together! even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" Now, the single question here is, was it Christ or the Jerusalemites that would not? Was it through his default or their's, that they were not

saved? Every well informed child of ten years old can answer, and answer right. Here it is objected that Jesus Christ says elsewhere, the sinner cannot come to him without the divine drawings; "No man can come to me except the father who hath sent me draw him;" John, vi, 44. The Saviour says elsewhere, "Without me ye can do nothing; John, xv, 5. The objector here quotes fairly, and shall be answered with impartiality and candor; a candid answer is deserved. The inability here is moral, not natural. Natural inability consists in being absolutely and literally unable to do the thing required, though perfectly and cheerfully willing. Moral inability consists in being utterly unwilling to do the thing required through a direct opposition of heart, though perfectly able, if there was a willing mind. This, I think, a fair and candid statement of these two kinds of inability. These certainly exist. Mankind act under their influence from day to day, and the scriptures certainly have reference to them both, and wherever they speak of the sinners inability, and plainly or by implication charge him with blame, they uniformly and unvaryingly mean moral inability; because natural inability is eternally before God and man a good excuse from blame. Suppose, sir, your wife lies ill in a fever; she appears quite in danger; you are extremely anxious to save the woman, because you dearly love her; you call in the very best medical aid the country affords, three or four of the best physicians you can obtain exert themselves to the utmost of their power; but the disease sets their skill at

defiance, and she dies. Now, will any man of common sense view you as blameable for not saving her; or will any body blame the physicians? I presume not; but natural inability forever and in all cases is just as good an excuse as in this. Now, sirs, I state another case; a wicked, bad hearted man maliciously and deliberately murders his wife; when prosecuted and brought before the judge, he frankly confesses he killed her, but pleads by way of excuse he could not help it; he hated her so excessively, felt so much malice, and thirsted so ardently for her blood, that he voluntarily killed her with malice aforethought. Here, sirs, is moral inability with all its blame, and no more. How different! the one perfectly innocent; the other the perfection of guilt; and without this clear distinction of moral and natural inability I can make nothing of a considerable portion of the sacred writings but jargon and inconsistency. The way a good many people preach about the guilt of Adam's sin, a limited atonement, and the sinner's inability to serve God, shocks me with its most shameful, and worse than childish, inconsistency. And I am astonished how a man of any understanding can do it without a blush as deep as crimson.

Do you ask me if it is proper for the sacred writers to wrest language from its common and usual sense, so far as to say men cannot do a thing, when all that can be meant by it is, that they will not do it, or that their hearts are opposed to it? To this I answer, there is no wresting language from its common meaning at all. This is using language according to common sense, and common

acceptation For example, I step into a store and ask a merchant if he will sell me fifty dollars worth of goods on six months credit; he answers me pleasantly enough, I cannot sir; why can he not? he has the goods; he can if he will; it does not suit his arrangements, and therefore, he is not willing; and that is all the *cannot* that is in the way. Is not this common language in such a case, and is it not as well understood in society as any other language? You ask your neighbour to indorse for you to the amount of a thousand dollars; his answer is, I cannot; what is the meaning of this cannot, but that he is not willing; yet the answer is, I cannot. It were easy to show by a thousand instances that this is the plain, common and well understood use of language in society every day. Let the instances adduced suffice. Am I asked if moral inability will as effectually prevent a sinner from doing his duty as if the inability was really natural? For example, will the moral inability of a sinner, the opposition of heart the sinner feels, as effectually prevent his receiving the Saviour, until God operates on his heart, as if he had no will wherewith to choose him? To this question I answer in the affirmative without hesitation; and farther, I observe, that regeneration is plainly represented in scripture as being made willing in the day of God's power; "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" Psalm, cx, 3. Is it asked then what is the use of keeping up a distinction if the one and the other effectually prevents the man from doing the thing required? I

answer, the one, that which is natural, leaves the subject of it perfectly innocent; the other, that which is moral, leaves the subject fairly chargeable with the foulest guilt; which, to the speaker, appears a difference that renders it quite necessary to keep up the distinction clearly. Farther, the man under the influence of natural inability is not the proper subject of either exhortation or dehortation; but he that is under the influence of moral inability is the proper subject of both. Permit me to illustrate my meaning in my own way. I hear my very worthy neighbour lies at the point of death; he is leaving an amiable, charming wife, who must become a forlorn and weeping widow, and half a dozen beautiful and promising children to become orphans. Now, sirs, suppose I repair to his bedside, and exhort him with vehemence and pathos not to die, but to remain with his family and rear them with tenderness; suppose I press him by the solemnity of his conjugal vows; by his paternal affection; by the exceeding loss his family will sustain, not to die. In what light must I appear to every man of reflection? Must it not be that of a madman? The poor suffering man cannot help dying; and to dehort him from dying is the perfection of folly. To exhort him to prepare for death might be very right; but the former would be mere madness. Now, for farther illustration, I will suppose another case. I hear my neighbour is about to leave his wife and family, not by the call of heaven, not by the stroke of death; he is leaving them for the illicit embraces of a base harlot, and about to abandon

them forever. Now I exhort and press him by a thousand solemn and sacred considerations to stay with his wife and family, and discharge his duty. To do so in the most solemn and ardent manner, is good sense and an indispensible duty; but were the inability natural, exhortation would be folly.

5. Notwithstanding all these things, many neglect attending to religion till it is eternally too late; Luke, xiii, 34, 35; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate!" Hosea, iv, 17; "Ephraim is joined to his Idols, let him alone;" Prov. i. 24—31; "Because I have called and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; for ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon me but I will not answer; they shall seek me early but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." These several scriptures certainly show that sinners may neglect the things that belong to their peace till it is too

late. That thousands are neglecting these things, their daily conduct plainly evinces; their thoughtlessness, their prayerlessness, their profanity, their manifest opposition to a life of religion and holiness. O sinner! is not your soul a witness?

6. Sinners by rejecting the offers of grace which they enjoy are sometimes judicially blinded, so that they never shall attend to them; "But now they are hid from thy eyes." In confirmation of this proposition see I. Thessalonians, ii, 11, 12; "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness;" Is it asked how this comports with the divine declaration that God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that they turn and live? I answer, about as well as sending them finally to eternal torment. I suppose God's declaring that he hath no delight in the death of a sinner does not necessarily imply that he will suffer the sinner to insult him forever with impunity.

7. The case of those who are thus judicially blinded is truly lamentable and enough to extract tears of sorrow from every benevolent and feeling soul. Is not their situation truly lamentable who are devoted to the wrath and vengeance of God forever; who are past all recovery; who never shall escape, but suffer through an eternal day; who once had the overtures of mercy, but voluntarily rejected them all, and must now suffer a misery aggravated by all the blessings and offers they ever enjoyed? Is it not

enough indeed to excite compassion in every compassionate breast, to think that an immortal, conscious, and rational creature should thus have incurred eternal misery? Jesus wept over Jerusalem. Do any answer that the sinner, who has thus incurred the divine displeasure, is rather an object of blame than commiseration? To me he appears the proper subject of both. See that hale, hearty, athletic man, who has violated the laws of his country executed as the victim of public vengeance; he is righteously condemned and justly executed, but is it not at the same time matter of extreme regret, that he who might have been a valuable citizen, useful to himself, and useful to the community, should thus have brought himself to an ignominious and untimely death, in the very flower of his days?

1. Learn from this subject, that they are only deceiving themselves and ruining their own souls who are hoping for heaven and eternal happiness though they have never been regenerated. With regard to such, the great work on which the eternal enjoyment of God and heaven depends is ye to do, and if this great work is never done heaven will never be enjoyed.

2. Learn the extreme madness and folly of procrastinating in matters of religion. It is manifest there is a limited time given in which we must work out our salvation or it will never be effected. Should we extend our delays beyond these limits, how dire the consequences? O the sufferings, the wretchedness and woe which must ensue in case of such dangerous procrastination!

3. Learn how much we ought all to be engaged to experience the things that belong to our peace? Are not the seasons we enjoy highly favourable? Do not many of us enjoy the season of youth? How favourable a time is this for attending to religion? The human mind, at this lovely and dangerous season, is comparatively free from care; whereas those of riper years are generally pressed and crowded with a variety of cares which greatly divide their attention, and leave scarcely half for God. My dear young friends, improve this lovely period while you may, you, and you alone, enjoy it; "Remember now thy creator," &c. Eccles. xii, 1.

4. Learn how awfully bitter and severe must be the reflections of gospel dispisers in hell forever! They might have embraced the gospel; their enmity of heart alone hindered. These reflections will make a hell of hell. Had the thing been absolutely and really unavoidable, by the utmost pains, duty and vigilance, hell would not be so intolerably dreadful. Indeed, I cannot conceive, for my own part, of hell torments being felt where there is no self disapprobation and guilt of conscience.

5. Learn from this subject how wicked and depraved mankind must be; numbers are still guilty of neglecting all the calls of the divine mercy and benevolence, and still turn a deaf ear to all the gracious invitations of the gospel.

6. Learn the awful danger of neglecting the precious calls of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in any other but the Lord

Jesus Christ; Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved." If this redeemer be finally rejected, our souls are forever undone. May the Lord of his infinite mercy incline all our hearts to embrace the blessed Saviour, and trust in him for salvation as offered in the gospel. AMEN.

SERMON XII.

THE LORD THE BELIEVER'S PORTION.

Psalm, LXXIII, 25.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

THERE is no part of the book of the sacred records more truly devotional or replete with the breathings of ardent piety, than the book of Psalms. Here we find the souls of the pious authors going out to God in the most holy aspirations, and breathing most ardently after communion and fellowship with the father of their spirits and the maker of their frames. How ardent, how cordial, how feeling, are those breathings of desire, as expressed in the language of my text? "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee." The psalmist informs us in this psalm, that his mind was sorely beset for a time with infidelity; "But as for me my steps were almost gone, my feet had well nigh slipped." While he beheld on the one hand the prosperity of the wicked and the depression of the righteous and humble poor, he almost came to the conclusion that there could be no reality in

religion; verse 13th; "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency;" and while this enquiring man reflected only on general appearances, exercising only his own cogitations on the subject, he could receive no rest to his spirits. But when he came into the sanctuary of God and learned there the end of the wicked, and that there is a future state where pious and godly men shall be raised to the divine favour and abundantly rewarded, and in which "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God," his mind was at rest, his tumult calmed, and his peace restored. O brethren, it is certainly a good thing to come into the sanctuary of God! There we learn a thousand useful things; there the raging tumult of the human passions is calmed, the tempest dispelled, and a sweet and almost divine tranquillity restored; and I believe there are very few men of intelligence who can satisfy the enquiries of their own minds on the divine administration, and the unequal distribution of good and evil in the present world, without calling into view the aid of divine revelation on this interesting subject; and of the number who cannot satisfy their minds here without the aid of divine revelation, the speaker candidly acknowledges himself to be one; but when he takes the lively oracles of God into view and the sacred truths taught there, his mind is at rest. Thus, no doubt, it is with many others. And it ought to be well realised that none of us, not excepting even those in the most suffering conditions are in a situation worse than our crimes have

deserved; "Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. iii, 33. It is to be observed that when the psalmist went to the sanctuary of God and his faith there obtained through the medium of sacred revelation the complete ascendency over his unbelief, he exulted in his victory and high confidence in God, exclaiming, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee." So I think will every true christian be disposed to do as well as the psalmist, when he feels that after a sharp contest his faith has got the victory over his unbelief, for he too is wont to exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Here are expressed the most ardent breathings of desire towards God and his holiness.

The proposition which appears manifestly contained in the words of my text is this, that the good man's affections are supremely set on God, and that there is no being in heaven, nor on earth, equally the object of his devout desire. In treating this subject a little farther on the present occasion, I shall endeavor to show,

I. What it is in the divine character and conduct which so much endears God to the pious man, that he exclaims in the language of my text, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee."

II. I shall make a few appropriate observations on this love which the good man feels to his God, and then conclude by some inferences.

I. Then, I am to show what it is in the divine

character and conduct, which so much endears God to the pious man that he exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

1. Then, I presume one thing which greatly endears the Deity to the pious man is, the supreme excellence and moral worth of his own character. The good man supremely loves God for his glorious character and perfections, especially his moral perfections, mercy, holiness, justice, righteousness, goodness, and truth. These are the divine perfections which render the Deity's moral worth so plainly manifest. Now, the good man being savingly illuminated by the spirit of God, discovers the moral worth and excellence of God's character, and therefore supremely loves him; "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee." The unregenerate not being thus savingly enlightened by the spirit of God, does not feel the Deity so endeared by the discovery, and consequently, does not exclaim as in my text; "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Now, sirs, here is a great and primary reason why the good man loves God, the moral worth and excellence of his character. But ought the good man to love God previous to the consideration of God loving him, and independent of that consideration? To this question, I unequivocally and without wavering, answer yes. Psalm, viii, 1; "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent

is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens!" Psalm, cxlviii, 13; "Let them praise the name of the Lord for his name alone is excellent." Now, the particular thing which I think the carnal man does not discern relative to spiritual things is, the moral excellence of God's perfections and which he never can, neither ever does discern until he is changed in the spirit of his mind, and it is by this change expressly that he becomes acquainted with it. It is a matter of spiritual taste. Suppose, for example, I had never tasted honey, what would be the short and easy way to obtain the correct idea of the taste of honey? Would it be for a learned and eloquent man to read me a course of very eloquent lectures on the subject? Or would not the better way be just to apply it to my palate? Would not a tea spoonful thus applied furnish me a more correct idea of honey, than the most erudite lecture of seven years on the subject? This communicates my idea lucidly with respect to this spiritual discernment and non-discernment. With regard to the existence of Deity, his greatness, and infinite wisdom, &c. &c. I see not why an unregenerate man may not reason as strongly and fairly as other men, provided he be possessed of a strong, investigating, logical mind. But while he remains in a state of unregeneracy, he never will descry moral beauty and excellence, more than a carnal mind will be subject to the law of God, while it is yet carnal; Rom. viii, 7. I hope none of my auditors will smile at the idea of taste applied thus; but should they, let them consult

their Bibles, and be a little more grave henceforward; Psalm, xxxiv, 8; "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

2. God having in his boundless benevolence provided a ransom for poor, lost and guilty sinners, and all the means of grace whereby they can be saved, is another thing which renders him the supreme object of desire to the man of genuine piety. When the humble christian looks back to the utterly lost and ruined situation in which he and all his brethren of the human family were, without a divine Redeemer, helpless, hopeless, and undone, utterly undone and that forever; and farther, when he contemplates the infinite kindness of the Almighty God in sending a Saviour to recover lost sinners from this deplorable condition, and to raise them to the glorious summit of celestial bliss instead of sinking them down to that flaming ruin, which their crimes merited, well may he exclaim with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." O my christian brother! does not your heart grow warm within you while you contemplate this infinite love of God to man? Do not your affections soar above? Do they not fix on things above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God? I hope, my believing friend, you do not blush to have it known that you love your God. O christian! who can be compared to your God, and Saviour Jesus Christ? Who, in all the regions of glory, could have redeemed your perishing soul but the Lord

Jesus Christ? Had the loftiest archangels who surrounded the throne of God, combined to redeem fallen sinners, they must have failed? They owed to Deity all the obedience they were able to perform and consequently had none for others. The dear Lord Jesus alone was adequate to the mighty undertaking, and able to perfect forever them that believe and are sanctified by his one offering.

3. Another thing God has done for his soul, and which induces him to exclaim in the language of my text, "Whom have I in heaven but thee," is applying the purchased redemption. God has illuminated his mind, he has changed his heart, he has enabled him to flee to the ark of eternal safety, and take shelter there from the threatening tempests of divine indignation. When the christian experiences that the name of the Lord is a strong tower and that the righteous man runneth into it and is safe, does he not well exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The good man recollects the wormwood and the gall of an unconverted state, and the deplorable situation in which he felt himself when in that condition; when the heavens lowered, when the thunders roared, when the lightnings flashed, and all the dire curses of Mount Ebal sounded in his astonished ears. O how ineffably dreadful was his deplorable condition! But at a certain time, and that too, a time when these awful tempests were most fearfully raging, the blessed Jesus rose in his power and majesty, "And rebuked the winds and the raging of the waters, and they ceased,

and there was a calm;" Luke, viii, 24. Ah! how sweetly he sits at the feet of Jesus in his right mind, smiles at the tempest, and sweetly exclaims in the language of my text, "There is none upon earth I desire beside thee." O my christian friends, do you know through divine grace, what these things mean? Do you know what a sweet experience of grace is? Have you felt the tempest's rage, christian brother? Have you sweetly felt the sunshine and the calm? Then, I presume, you exclaim with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?"

4. Another thing which endears the Lord exceedingly to the pious man is, the many deliverances which the Lord has wrought for him since his first experience of grace. Ah believer, how often have you wandered from the Lord, and that even since you knew his love? And how often has he reclaimed you too? What must have been your doleful portion long before now had you not been upheld by your God? Must you have sunk to everlasting ruin? If you persevere in a state of holiness and well-doing, is it not by the grace of God? Has not God wrought for you a thousand deliverances, and those, too, where every other arm in the universe must have failed; do you not, then, gratefully exclaim with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee?" The christian is daily dependent on God! and the truth is, God is working daily deliverances for him. This he feels, this he realises, and therefore exclaims "There is none upon earth I desire beside thee.

5. Another thing which renders the Deity the great object of desire to the man of piety and devotion is the temporal blessings which God is pouring on him so profusely every day and hour of his existence. Does he not open his hand liberally and supply your wants from his bounty and munificence? Is it not from God you enjoy all the blessings and comforts of life, your health, your wealth, your friends, and safe abode? Are these blessings to be overlooked by the man of God, or are they to be gratefully regarded and received by the man of piety, and recorded on the tablet of a grateful heart? When the man of genuine religion looks on that profusion of temporal blessings which the Lord in his good providence bestows upon him, well may he exclaim with rapture and devotion, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire beside thee! Who but the Lord could give these fine fruitful seasons, and cause my corn, my wheat, my cotton, tobacco, and every necessary vegetable thus luxuriantly to spring, to grow, to ripen? Who but he could thus fill my cribs, my barns, my gins, and granaries, with plenty? Not one. But for the blessing of the Lord, this earth would lie barren, scorched and fruitless as the deserts of Arabia. Shall not the pious man then devoutly acknowledge the Lord as his God, and exclaim "Whom have I in heaven but thee." O my christian brother, look over those luxuriant corn and cotton fields; view your fair prospects of plenty, and superfluity; and devoutly love your God. Ah my christian friends,

husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, see those lovely smiling children rising up, like olive plants around your tables, and love your God more ardently still. Set before them the most safe and guarded example, educate them in the fear of God, early imbue their minds with wholesome knowledge and christian principle, so shall you be happily instrumental in training them for the skies, where, through divine grace, you shall eventually meet them, and spend a happy eternity in their dear society. And if God should see proper to call any of them away before they are capable of such instruction as I recommend, part with them cheerfully, seeing he who loves them better sends for them, and seeing he who never erred has declared that "Of such is the kingdom of God;" Mark, x, 14.

6. The Lord is the great object of desire to the pious man because of the many deliverances and signal favours, which he hopes yet to experience at the divine hand. He knows he is not yet in heaven, but in a world unfriendly to religion, a most insalubrious clime in a spiritual view, where he is encompassed with a most pestilential atmosphere, as well as with a thousand savage beasts of prey, ready to devour. Now, sirs, how is the poor, feeble christian to make good his way to Immanuel's land through all these beasts of prey, and pestilential damps? Ah! methinks I hear the humble host of christians answer with one voice, "Through God we shall do valiantly, for he it is that treadeth down our enemies;" "Whom have I in heaven, my God, but thee, and there is

none upon earth I desire beside thee." But for my blessed God I should be defeated by the host of my spiritual foes, and eventually fall before their malignant rage. Who shall support the believer, when he must pass solitary and alone through the valley of the shadow of death? Ah! my christian friend, to whom do you look for succour and final support in this solitary vale? None but your God, I know. Believer, do you not expect assuredly the deliverance of your God, when an affectionate wife, dutiful children and kind neighbours must all fail. These may accompany you to the brink of the Jordan, but will not pass through. You confide in your God, that he alone will support, whilst your exclamation is in the ardent and pathetic language of my text, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee."

7. Another thing which greatly endears the Deity to the good man is, what he will still do for him hereafter, and that in the celestial state; 24th verse, "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to thy glory." Thus, the prospect of eternal felicity in heaven endears God greatly to the good man.

II. I am to make a few appropriate observations on this love which a good man feels to his God.

1. Then, I observe with respect to these breathings of desire expressed in the impassioned language of my text, they are not a strange and extraordinary kind of thing which takes place with him once or twice, or a dozen times in a long life:

These holy breathings of desire are a kind of every day exercise with the man of God. He feels them when in his spiritual right mind, from day to day, and frequently in the same day; for they are his pleasure, his duty, and his joy; the very food of his soul, and his spiritual meat and drink; Psalm, cxxxix, 17, 18; "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them, if I would count them they are more than the sands; when I awake I am still with thee." Thus does it plainly appear, that those holy breathings of desire expressed in my text, are frequent, repeated and delightful! Happy they who best know those precious truths from sweet experience.

2. With regard to those holy exercises I observe, the soul is wont to feel them in consequence of serious reflection on the divine character, conduct and administration. So it appears to have been with the psalmist; so we doubt not it has been with many others.

3. These exercises are passing sweet to the pious humble subject of them. Perhaps the human mind never feels so consummately happy, as when the pious man exclaims sincerely, and earnestly, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee." This is bliss without alloy. No scar is left on the conscience, in consequence of indulgence here. We drink from these precious wells of salvation, and yet are always dry.

My 4th observation with regard to these holy breathings of desire is that they are perfectly

rational. Now, often when we give aloose to our desires on earthly objects, they are placed on inferior good, and that supremely. This we conceive is quite unreasonable. But when our affections are supremely set on God, they are just where they ought to be, and of course our reasonable duty is performed. The object which is lovely ought to be loved, and that in proportion to the quantity of loveliness it possesses. But the great God is supremely lovely, and therefore ought to possess our supreme affections. Moreover, God is our benefactor as well as our creator and preserver. As such it is reasonable we should love him, as it is unquestionably reasonable we should love them who do us most good.

1. I infer from this subject that those who are entire strangers to these exercises, and know nothing of them experimentally, are also entire strangers to true and genuine religion. These exercises are of its very nature and essence. I could just as consistently and as easily conceive how a man might be one of the best husbands the world ever saw, though he never desires to see his wife nor enjoy her society, as that he is a good christian who experiences none of these holy breathings of desire after God.

2. Learn the necessity and propriety of reflecting much on God and things divine. This subject informs us that these holy and ardent desires are the result of appropriate reflections on the conduct, character and administration of the Deity. What but this is the rational way to light up our affections to a holy flame? And if at any time we

should be beset like the psalmist, with infidel thoughts, let us, as he did, repair to the sanctuary of God, and humbly learn from him; let us never lean to our own understanding too far.

3. The irreligious must be strangers to the most high and substantial happiness which God allots to man here below. If the highest happiness men enjoy in the present state consists in the testimonies of a good conscience, and a sweet sense of pardoned sin, then, certainly, those who know not God neither obey the gospel, must be unacquainted with it. We do not presume nor feel at all disposed to say, that men unacquainted with experimental religion have no happiness or sources of enjoyment. They have some beyond controversy, but they fall far short of those of the godly. Fair and logical reasoning on this subject seems to be this: So far as the irreligious man indulges in things really innocent and lawful, the man of piety may enjoy the same; say, for example, the enjoyment which results from the society of our families; for I imagine the most ingenious logician can show no good reason why a devout and pious man cannot enjoy as much family felicity as any other man. But if what the irreligious man calls his happiness, consists in things unlawful, it must terminate in misery, and we often see it do so plainly, and even in this world; so that he must not make calculations here. Now, sirs, if these statements are correct, then the man of piety certainly has greatly the advantage of the man of the world in point of felicity, as he may enjoy all the worldling enjoys, and with this all the felicity that

results from the testimonies of a good conscience, and the approbation of his God.

4. Learn from this subject how false and unfounded are the reproaches, which are cast on religion by the ungodly world. It is branded as enthusiastical, whimsical, fanciful and irrational. That men of weak and scanty judgments, and fervid, flighty imaginations have sometimes gone to great and unwarrantable excesses, and indulged in great extravagancies, I am not disposed to deny. Too much of this have I seen. But what is the pure and gentle spirit of genuine christianity the worse for this? Just nothing at all sirs. Nor is that sacred thing accountable for any such follies, because it has not required them. Let men of reflection judge as they ought to do of our divine religion; that is, upon its own merits, and not on the whims and follies of a few weak minded people, who may profess it. AMEN.

SERMON XIII.

THE COMING OF THE LORD TO HIS TEMPLE.

Malachi, III, 1, 2.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts; but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.

THESE words, my brethren, both contain a prediction of Jesus Christ's advent to our world as a divine reformer, and at the same time communicate an exalted idea of the purity of that religion which he would require of his followers.

That a shiloh, or deliverer was generally expected, by the Jewish nation at the time this prophecy was written, must be manifest to every attentive reader of the old testament scriptures. The expectation of this great deliverer had long existed amongst this ancient people of God, even from the time in which Jacob pronounced the blessing on his sons; Gen. xlix, 10; "The

sceptcr shall not depart from Judah, nor a law giver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be." This Shiloh was Jesus Christ, the adorable son of God, and from this time forward he was expected by this people. A number of very plain predictions were written respecting him by various Jewish prophets, more especially by David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Zechariah, as will fully appear by a small degree of attention to their respective writings. But perhaps the blessed Jesus is no where more plainly spoken of in the prophetical writings, than in the words of my text; "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me," &c. Here Jesus Christ the second person of the adorable trinity, expressly informs us of the approach of his forerunner or harbinger, John the Baptist; Mat. xi, 10; "For this is he of whom it is written, behold I will send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee;" also, Mark, i, 2; "As it is written in the prophets, behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee;" here is an express reference to the prediction in my text; "And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." God had a temple for his public sanctuary service at Jerusalem; and here is a prediction and promise that his son should visit that temple in person, and appear in that sacred edifice, where God his father had been so often worshipped. This promise was made good, and this prediction literally fulfilled by Jesus Christ in the days of his incarnation; Mat. xxi, 12—14;

"And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that bought and sold in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and said unto them, it is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves; and the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them;" Mark, xi, 15—17; "And they came to Jerusalem and Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple; and he taught saying unto them, is it not written, my house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves?" Then we find Jesus came to his temple and came with authority and majesty; "Even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." The promised Saviour was known amongst the Jews as God's messenger or the messenger and angel of the covenant, and as such the people delighted in him. And here is a promise made by the Sovereign Lord God, that he should come to his temple; "But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth; for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap?" as if he had said, Jews, however anxious you may appear with respect to this coming Saviour, I fear you will not be so well pleased with his appearance, nor so well stand the test of his religion when he cometh. For he will teach a pure and

holy religion, far surpassing in point of purity and moral excellence what many of you exhibit in your practice. It will not be a little attention to tithes of mint, anise and cummin, or some mere external observances, which will then do. He will require pure and undefiled religion, a new heart, judgment and the love of God; "For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap;" as the refiner's fire is to separate the precious from the vile, and the gold from the dross; so this Saviour will separate the dross of selfishness, pride and empty ceremony, from purity and the love of God in his service. So will Jesus, the coming Saviour, by his counsels, his example, his spirit, and his blood, wash away moral filth, impurity and uncleanness from his followers, and thus shall he be like fuller's soap; and for proof that he performs this washing, see John's gospel, xiii, 8; "Peter saith unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet; Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Then, sirs, here is a plain prediction of Christ's coming, and refers particularly to his coming in human flesh, and going into the temple. In this original sense of the prediction it has long since been fulfilled, and his native heavens have again received him until the times of the restitution of all things. But there is another high and important sense in which he is still the coming Saviour; in which he hath come oftentimes since his personal ascent to glory, and in which we hope he will yet often come, by the effusions of his holy spirit on the minds of men. Thus he came at the day of Pentecost; Acts ii, 1—4; "And

when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven the sound as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance;" 37th verse of the same chapter; "And when they heard this they were pricked in the heart and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" verses 41, 42; "Then they that gladly received the word were baptised, and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Thus he came in the general spread of the gospel in the first ages of christianity. Who can possibly account for the extraordinary facts which took place during the three first centuries of the christian era otherwise than by ascribing them to the mighty and irresistible power of the Holy Ghost? See a dozen poor, plain, unlettered fishermen go out in the name of Jesus of Nazareth to revolutionise the world! See how eminently they succeed! See them and their undaunted successors in office, produce apparently such a revolution as never existed before, nor since. A revolution, sirs, compared with which, the British, the American, the French revolutions, so much talked and boasted of, shrink into littleness and comparative

nothings. What were the arms these illiterate, home-bred fishermen used? Not sword, fire, and faggot, except that sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, and that fire of holy love which is lighted up effectually in the human heart by the influence of the Holy Ghost. With what had they to contend? What were these humble, self-denied men called to overthrow and abolish? The most stubborn and powerful things the world ever saw; religious prejudices; religious establishments! When these meek and lowly followers of their more meek and lowly Master turned out to revolutionize the world, Jewish or Pagan prejudices and establishments prevailed in every nation and covered the whole earth. Come ye scoffing infidels, come and behold, while I point you to the greatest wonder the world ever saw, except the incarnation of Jesus Christ, or this excepted, ever will see till it sees the general judgment of the great God! See their religious establishments, both Jewish and Pagan, tottering, bowing, falling; see religious prejudices receding, before what? Before the preaching of a crucified Jesus! and simple, earnest, unvarnished persuasion. Now, permit me to ask, my unbelieving friend, is there a rational being under heaven, can account satisfactorily for these things any other way than by ascribing them to the invisible, but mighty power of the mighty God! I presume, sirs, it must be conceded there is not. Here is no combination of earthly powers, as at Waterloo; here is no Napoleon with his dragoons, and men of blood and battle to achieve this bloodless and

unparalleled revolution. It can be fairly ascribed to him, and to him only, who led captivity captive when he hung on the cross. Unbelievers, we call upon you then to receive our christian corollary; the Bible is true; the christian religion is from God, and Jesus of Nazareth, the once meek and lowly stranger, is the Saviour of the world! Infidels beware! Thus he came at the reformation from popery. See the whole world called christian, enveloped in gross darkness, and under the dominion of spiritual tyranny; the sacred book, the holy bible, kept back from the laity and divine service celebrated in an unknown tongue. Who were the great and active instruments of this great reformation? Martin Luther and John Calvin, two obscure Franciscan Friars. These two young men, putting their lives in their hands, undertook to oppose the most gigantic power then on earth; who could have anticipated success? Not one. Yet success, notwithstanding such unpromising beginnings, crowned their efforts, and satan, like lightning, fell to the ground. The Lord Jesus came to his temple, and a great part of the world became christian. The blessed Redeemer came to his temple in that great revival of religion which obtained from fifty to eighty years ago both in Europe and America. We hope and believe he is coming at this day in various parts of the world. Then there is a very high and important sense in which the Lord Jesus Christ is still the coming saviour, and the broadest ground of encouragement for his people to look and pray that he may come to his temple; and it is true

also, that many will not abide the day of his coming, nor stand when he appeareth, for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap."

I. We shall show when it may be said that Christ has come to visit his temple by the sacred influence of his holy spirit.

II. We shall attempt to show what will stand the test as true religion and what will not, when he shall come, who is as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; then conclude.

I. Then, we are to show when Christ may be said to have come to his temple by the sacred influence of his blessed spirit.

1. When a general concern prevails amongst a people about their salvation, when their great enquiry is, what they shall do to be saved. This appears to have been the manifest effect of his coming to Peter's hearers. But it is to be carefully observed, we do not state that a mere outcry what we shall do to be saved, is a certain proof that Christ has come in a saving manner. It may be far otherwise with many. But wherever the blessed Saviour comes and arrests the attention of many souls and brings them to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, there is wont to be very serious enquiry, what such awakened souls shall do to be saved.

2. We think Christ may be said to have come to his temple, when mankind are stirred up to an unusual and vigorous attention to the means of grace God has put within their power. As we think it is Christ who, by his holy influence and spirit, thus disposes men to come together; Gen.

xlix, 10; "And to him shall the gathering of the people be;" "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase;" Dan. xii, 4. We conceive there is nothing more common, than for mankind to wait on the means of divine grace, when the Lord whom they seek, comes to his temple, and they are seriously concerned about their salvation. When many reform their lives and manners, and live soberly, righteously, and godly to human view, we believe the Lord has come to his temple. When, for example, a spirit of revelling, frolicking and folly gives way to a spirit of prayer and supplication, when meetings for prayer and other religious exercises are frequent in our towns, and country places, instead of balls, frolicks, and theatrical entertainments, and more especially, when those very people who formerly were the ring-leaders and promoters of these latter things, are now the promoters and encouragers of devotion, and evangelical piety; when men and women, who formerly stirred each other up in the pursuit of vanities and sinful pleasures, are now engaged in provoking each other to love and good works, and encouraging each others hearts, and strengthening each others hands in the good ways of holiness and the service of God, the Lord hath assuredly come to his temple, when religious and divine things occupy the attention of all ranks and descriptions of men.

4. When a spirit of love and christian forbearance prevails amongst the different denominations of christians, and a spirit of bigotry and censoriousness recedes. These things are what the scriptures

manifestly require; Rom. xii, 9; "Let love be without dissimulation, abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good;" I. Pet. iii, 8; "Finally be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous;" Ephes. iv, 1—3; "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;" With regard to minor differences, in matters of religious opinion, I do not think an illiberal, angry, debating spirit ought to be indulged; it is disgraceful to the christian profession. So various are the mental powers of mankind, their prejudices, educations and prepossessions, that a thinking rational man will not expect to see them perfectly agree in all the minutia of religious opinion, any more than he will expect to hear all the clocks in the city strike at the same moment of time; and this, I presume he will scarcely ever hear. If a man denies the divinity of Jesus Christ, and would degrade the incarnate God to the meanness of a mere creature, if another denies the all atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and would teach men to trust in the merit of their own works for acceptance with God, while another denies the special and sanctifying influences of God's spirit in regeneration and sanctification, I think to remonstrate against these fatal and destructive errors, is so far from bespeaking the censorious bigot, it exhibits the

lover of truth and the friend of mankind; but we are certainly not to view in the same light all the slighter shades of difference in opinion.

5. When those who have long been considered as the people of the Lord by all, are stirred up to greater diligence, fervour and devotion, in the service of God, I presume we may conclude the Lord hath come to his temple; and God's people themselves sometimes stand in need of reviving too.

6. When infidels, deists and impious offenders lay down the weapons of their rebellion, and no longer dare to open their mouths against the Lord and his anointed; Isaiah, lii, 15; "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him."

7. When vice and immorality subside, and vital piety, true holiness and genuine morality prevail, the Lord may be said to have visited his temple.

II. We are to show what will, and what will not, stand the test as true religion, when he cometh, who is as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap. Now, sirs, inasmuch as Jesus Christ hath long since come to his temple and sat there as a refiner, and taught what is the pure and the precious, and what the refuse and the vile, we will do well to learn from him what will stand the test.

1. Then, he hath most expressly taught us that a Pharisaical righteousness will not do; Mat. v, 20; "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." These Pharisees were a

self-righteous, self-opiniated sect, who piqued themselves much on their own righteousness and certain observances of the Mosaic law, while they despised others. They made long prayers; "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, for you devour widow's houses; and for a pretence make long prayers, therefore shall ye receive the greater damnation;" Mat. xxiii, 14. How just and righteous is this sentence of our blessed Lord? What ought such a set of unrighteous men to expect but an aggravated damnation? Horrible crime! Wronging the widow and fatherless, a description of people that all generous minds view it as their honour and duty to protect and favour; and then, with impious effrontery, lifting up these vile and polluted hands, defiled with unjust gain, to the eternal God. O what an insult to the Lord Jehovah! These scribes and Pharisees were very zealous in their own way; Mat. xxiii, 15; "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisee, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him two-fold more a child of hell than yourselves!" We find that great apparent, and especially affected zeal, will not do. We want something more to satisfy us, that a man possesses that religion which will stand the test when he comes, who is as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap, than a little grimace, affected sanctity, party zeal, and travelling every where to make proselytes. These Pharisees were very particular "to pay tithes of mint, anise and cummin, but quite neglected the infinitely greater things, judgment, mercy and faith;"

Mat. xxiii, 23. These Pharisees put on an outside show of religion, but were inwardly wicked and ungodly; Mat. xxiii, 25; "Wo unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for you make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess! verse 28, of the same chapter; "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men."

Then we find plainly that mere outward things, or a name to live will not do.

That religion which will stand the test before him who is as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap, consists radically in a new heart, in a regenerated heart; John, iii, 3; "Verily! verily! I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Regeneration consists in making the dead alive; Eph. ii, 1; "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." That is, making them spiritually alive, or changing them from a state of nature to a state of grace. Mankind are, by nature, enmity of heart against God; Rom. viii, 7; "For the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Now, while this enmity remains unbroken in the heart, there is no such thing as true religion; and if men were to put on the most extraordinary appearances of true religion in the world, if the heart is not brought to love God for his glory, they will be lost. The exercises of this new heart, as they respect the Deity, are the following: love supreme to the Deity, founded on his moral excellence and communicated goodness. God must be loved for

his glory as well as his communicated goodness, otherwise our love is defective in principle. Repentance toward God; this repentance has sin for its object; it extends to sins of the heart as well as sins of the life; Rom. vii, 24; "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It extends to original as well as actual sin; Psalm, li, 5; "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here we find the Psalmist confesses his original as well as his actual sins. True repentance always produces reformation, so far as reformation is necessary: Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is another important ingredient in that religion which will stand the test when he appeareth, who is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. True saving faith consists radically, in receiving and resting on Jesus Christ for salvation, as offered in the gospel; John, i, 12; "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," and is an exercise of the heart; Rom. x, 10; "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Worship and adoration of the ever blessed God is implied and goes far into that religion which will abide the day of his coming, who is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. Strict justice to our fellow men, is another important ingredient in that religion which will stand the test; Mat. vii, 12; "All things therefore, whatsoever ye will that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets;" and after all

that is said on the subject, can we suppose he will dispense with this great article of moral justice? Charity is also another important article in that religion which will stand the test; I. Cor. xiii, 1, compared with the last verse; "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;" Col. iii, 12; "Put on therefore, holy and beloved, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies;" I. John, iii, 17; "If any man have this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in that man?" Humility is another thing quite necessary in that religion which will stand the test of him, who is like a refiner's fire; Mat. xxiii, 12; "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is a favorite maxim of Jesus Christ and used by him oftener than any other. The religion taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ leads not to show or ostentation. It courts no applause and affects no parade. It is plain, simple, unadorned. It leads to moral right in the sight of God and man; charity and purity of mind is another very necessary thing in true religion; Mat. v, 28; "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" I. Thes. iii, 3—5; "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification, and

honor not in the lusts of concupiscence even as the Gentiles who know not God." Sobriety and temperance, and due self-regimen go far into that religion which will stand the test of him, who is as a refiner's fire; I. Thes. v, 6; "Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober;" I. Peter, i, 13; "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought to you, at the revelation of Jesus Christ;" I. Peter, iv, 7; "Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer;" I. Peter, v, 8; "Be sober, be vigilant." This sobriety, so earnestly recommended by the sacred writers, is particularly opposed to two things; intoxication by ardent spirits and levity of conduct, each of which is degrading to rational creatures, and ought to be strictly guarded against for the sake of their own dignity, were there no scripture command on the subject; how much more so then, when this sobriety is matter of repeated command by the sacred writer?

1. Learn from this subject the reason there is to hope that God is visiting his temple, and coming by the sacred influence of his spirit to the hearts of many people, and that too, in our favoured country. Witness the many signal revivals of religion which have obtained in the United States in the last ten years, and more especially in the north-eastern part of the same, when hundreds upon hundreds have been brought hopefully to the knowledge of the truth. Blessed Jesus, thou prince of peace, reascend thy conquering car, push thy glorious conquests on, and make us all the trophies of thy grace.

2. Learn how very desirable an object the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to his temple is, and how much we all ought to be engaged to obtain the visits of his grace. By these shall sinners be converted, christians quickened, and God's cause built up and promoted in the world. That this may be the case let us be employed in earnest prayer and holy living; so shall we obtain the divine blessing.

3. Learn the great reason there is to fear, that many professors amongst us, will not well abide the day of his coming, nor stand when he appeareth who is like a refiner's fire. It is much to be feared, that when he has purged away all the dross, and taken away all the tin from many professors there will be but little left. This the Lord declares he will do; Isaiah, i, 25; "And I will thoroughly purge away all thy dross and take away all thy tin." O what will become of poor Pharisaical professors then! Let us examine ourselves carefully in the light of this subject, whether we will be able in the day of final audit to stand the scrutiny of him, who is as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap. May the Lord add his blessing to all our attempts in his service for the Redeemer's sake. AMEN.

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST THE SACRIFICAL OFFERING FOR SIN COMING TO JUDGMENT.

Hebrews, IX, 28.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

IN this chapter, the apostle, comparing the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious high priest of our profession, with the Jewish high priests under the law, infers the decided superiority of the former to the latter, in a variety of important particulars. The Jewish high priest went into the holiest of all once every year, not without blood, which he offered first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people; verse, 7; "But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people;" but Jesus Christ having come a high priest of good things to come, not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,

" Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ; for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?"

The superiority of Jesus Christ farther appears in this, that the Jewish priest himself was defiled too and offered first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people, but Jesus Christ was pure and holy and undefiled, and did not need to make any offering for himself ; his offering was altogether for others.

His superiority farther appears in this, that the Jewish high priest went into the holy places made with hands, which were only the figures of the true, " But Christ has entered into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us ;" verse 24.

Moreover, the Jewish high priest entered once a year into the holy place, and thus was to repeat his entrance year after year ; " But Jesus Christ hath forever put away sin by the one sacrifice of himself ;" verse 26. And as it is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment, " So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

I. We shall make a few observations respecting this one offering mentioned in my text.

II. I shall show in what sense Christ bore the sins of many, and the great end this answers in the economy of christian salvation.

III. We shall show what is implied in this looking for Christ.

IV. Make some observations on this second and final appearance of Jesus Christ, and then conclude with some inferences and application.

I. We are to make a few observations respecting this one offering of Jesus Christ spoken of in my text; "So Christ was once offered," &c.

1. We observe, that Jesus Christ was both the offering and the priest, agreeably to verse 14; "Who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God." Here, then, we see Jesus Christ offered himself voluntarily to God. The Jewish high priests under the law, made offerings to God; tho' it was some other animal they offered, and not themselves; but the glorious high priest of our profession, offered himself without spot to God. He was the offering, and he himself made it; his human nature was the offering made, and his divine nature was the altar on which this offering was made; this was the altar which sanctified the gift.

2. I observe, that Christ our blessed Lord made this offering at the expense of extreme suffering. The death which the blessed Redeemer died in making this offering, was of the most lingering, painful and shameful kind, the death of the cross; a death inflicted on slaves only and on the lowest

and vilest malefactors amongst the Romans, and never on offenders of rank and condition. Therefore, of consequence, it was a most shameful and ignominious death; it was a death of the most lingering and painful kind; the victim was nailed to a cross through his hands and feet; his feet were nailed to an upright post; his hands to a transverse beam, and left to hang, till, through the copious effusion of blood, and the extreme pain of his wounds, he expired. Consequently, then, his torture was extreme and inconceivable. Well might the Saviour exclaim in the bitterness of his sorrow, when hanging on his wounds, "Ye that pass by, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of the fierceness of his anger;" Lam. i, 12. But when Jesus Christ once offered himself to bear the sins of many, extreme as the tortures inflicted on his body were, they were far exceeded by the more dreadful sufferings of his soul; for you must recollect, when Jesus Christ once offered himself to bear the sins of many, it was his whole human nature he offered; his soul as well as his body. This representation accords most perfectly with sacred writ; Isaiah, liii, 10; "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." The extreme sufferings of the Saviour's holy soul proceeded from the dereliction of his heavenly father, in that most gloomy, dreadful hour, when the extremity of his

pain extorted from him the lamentable outcry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

At this awful moment a deep impression of the wrath and indignation of the Lord against a sinful and degenerate world, was impressed upon his soul, and which, in reality, was the soul of his sufferings. O how extreme were the agonies of the holy and immaculate Saviour at this gloomy hour! his body gashed and torn with wounds; the tender fibres of his hands and feet perforated with rude iron spikes; the divine supports withdrawn from his soul, and an awful sense of the divine displeasure against sinners, whom he represented, impressed upon his mind! And no doubt, in this tremendous hour, malignant demons assaulted him fiercely, instigated by their infernal malice; for their's is the hour and power of darkness. This offering was made at the expense of extreme suffering

3. We observe, this was an offering quite necessary to be made for sin; yea, absolutely and indispensibly so, if mankind are to be saved at all. This necessity I presume we may reasonably infer from the divine conduct on the occasion. It was made by a person of distinguished dignity, and at extreme expense. We are not to conclude this would have been the case had it not been absolutely necessary. God is not prodigal of his gifts. He does not lavish them away unnecessarily, or without some just and proper call. The very mission of Jesus Christ unto our world is a manifest proof, that that mission was necessary. I

am well aware there are not wanting speculative writers, who have suggested that God, as an all-wise, and almighty being, might have adopted many other plans which would have been effectual for the salvation of sinners, without the death and sufferings of Christ. From this opinion, however, the present speaker feels himself constrained to dissent; he thinks God is doing his best at the head of the universe, for the promotion of his own glory and the diffusion of radical happiness. Is it asked if God cannot do any thing and all things, and amongst the rest, if he could not have saved mankind without the intervention of Jesus Christ? To this question I answer, God can do all things that are the proper objects of divine power and do not imply contradiction or reflect on his glory; but whatever implies contradiction, or reflects on the glory of God, is not the proper object of divine power at all, and we conceive there is no impropriety, nor the slighest degree of immodesty in saying, God cannot do it. Of this description we conceive is the article of saving sinners, without a Saviour. God cannot lie. He cannot act wickedly, nor do things improper; not that God wants natural power to do these things, but is perfectly morally unable. The reason why God cannot act wickedly or do wrong, is specifically the same, why an unregenerate sinner cannot act holily or do religiously right. In each case the inability consists in want of will, and not in want of natural ability, and this is just as much truth in one case as the other, according to my very humble conceptions; God is so

consummately holy and excellent, he never will do wrong; and the sinner is so consummately wicked and opposed to God and holiness, that he never will do religiously right, till his heart is renewed by grace.

This necessity of Jesus Christ making himself an offering for sin, is founded on the lapse of human nature. Had mankind maintained their primeval state of rectitude, an interposing Saviour and an offering for sin would not have been necessary. In that event they would have been justified by their own works and have been saved on the merit of their obedience; Gal. iii, 12, last clause; "the man that doeth these things shall live by them."

Mankind have fallen from that primeval rectitude in which they were created. This lamentable fact is put beyond any reasonable dispute in the sacred pages, the truth of whose testimony on this subject is strongly corroborated by matter of fact; see the following direct scripture testimony; "So this only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions;" Eccles. vii, 29; "For vain man would be wise, though man be born like the wild ass's colt;" Job xi, 12; "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" Psalm, li, 5; "How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed;" Lam. iv, 1; "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water;" Jer. ii, 13. These passages of sacred writ, together with a variety of others

easily adduced, plainly show, that mankind are not now in the same situation in which they were created, in which the first pair were originally created. A change has unquestionably taken place. The present morally corrupt condition of human kind is manifest, and to the candid and intelligent mind, perfectly undeniable. Without lengthy or elaborate arguments in proof of this deplorable fact, and in corroboration of scripture testimony, permit me to ask you, my dear auditors, what means all the expensive apparatus of civil government? Is it not to keep the great mass of society in order? Has not all enough to do? Yea, does not all fail of succeeding to any thing like perfection? How many murders, robberies, thefts, rapes, and adulteries still obtain, notwithstanding all the exertions of government to the contrary, and that, too, in our own favoured country, the best governed country in the world? Is not the language of all this, loud, plain, and intelligible? And does it not all go plainly to establish this truth, that the race of man is, as the scriptures represent it, in a fallen and apostate condition? Hence the necessity of a saviour; mankind cannot save themselves by the deeds of the law; Rom. iii, 20; "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin;" Gal. iii, 11; "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith." Now, the reason why no man is justified by the law is, not because of any fault or deficiency in the law, but because the sinner

does not comply with the requirements of the law; which, if the sinner would do, the law would be just as available to his salvation now as it would have been in the garden of Eden; "For the man that doeth them shall live by them;" Gal. iii, 12; "If the law is weak, it is through flesh;" Rom. viii, 3; "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

It did not comport with the perfections of the Deity to forgive sinners without an atonement; in that event, the evil of sin never could have been fairly exhibited to all intelligent beings, nor would they have believed that the Deity hates it with that perfect hatred which he does. Is it asked if the sinners sincere repentance is not a sufficient atonement, and what should the Deity want more? Is it not the part of a generous mind to forgive an offender on his repentance and humble confession? I answer, in case of private offences, it is always right to be forward in generosity and forgiveness, on the offender's confession and repentance; but it will never do to extend this principle to officers of government, acting in their official capacity. Suppose when a criminal is put on his trial for murder, he should confess he had perpetrated the murder with which he is charged and that with evil design and malice aforethought, but make full confession of his crime and tender his repentance as an atonement, professing the highest degree of contrition; I ask, can the judge, acting in character, order the sheriff to discharge the

prisoner? I need not dwell on this, barely to suggest it is sufficiently to expose it. And shall the dignified government of Almighty God, accept that as an atonement for sin which would be rejected with disdain if offered to the government of men.

II. I am to show in what sense Christ bore the sins of many, and what end this will answer in the economy of salvation. We read elsewhere to the same amount; I. Peter, ii, 24; "Who his own-self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Now, the great question here is, what are we to understand by Christ bearing our sins?

This phraseology means no more than that Christ took the law place of the sinner, and sustained the punishment in our place, which was due to our sins; and not by any means that he was a sinner like unto us, because this is not true, as a matter of fact. But it is most literally true that he bore the punishment due to our sins; Isa. liii, 4, 5; "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Thus it appears undeniable, that by Christ bearing the sins of many, we are to understand his sustaining the punishment due to sin. The great question farther here is, what valuable end this will answer in the economy of salvation? To this question I answer, it makes complete atonement for sin, and procures the believer acceptance with

God. It removes the obstacles which obstructed the sinner's salvation, and renders it consistent with the dignity of the divine government, and the perfections of God to show mercy to men. How does it remove the obstacles that obstructed the sinner's salvation? By displaying the justice of God as clearly as the condemnation of all sinners to all eternity would have done. What can display more lucidly God's regard to justice, and the rights of his government, than the sufferings of the blessed Redeemer. When this immaculate Saviour in his agony in Gethsemane saw the storm of divine vengeance collecting, when he saw the clouds rising, and heard the awful thunders roar, his human nature for the moment shrunk from the dreadful prospect; insomuch that he prayed his father, if it were possible, that the dreadful cup of sufferings he was just about to drink, might pass from him; that is, as I understand the blessed Redeemer, if the salvation of men may be effected without all this suffering, let it be done. However, on a moment's self collection, he acquiesced, crying out, thy will be done; Mat. xxvi, 39; "And he went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt!" Now, sirs, what can display the justice of God more than his conduct on this occasion? Does not bearing our sins in the scripture sense, exhibit as clearly the evil of sin, as the sufferings of all sinners to all eternity would have done? Would you see sin in its most flagrant colours, I shall not refer you

to the smoking pit of eternal pain, but to a suffering Saviour languishing on the cross. There it is, that this abominable thing which God hates, appears in its most odious colours.

III. I am to point out what is implied in looking for Christ in the sense of my text; "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

1. Looking for Christ implies a firm and steady belief of the sacred word and that Christ has not only once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but that he will appear hereafter to judge the nations at his bar, and that he will not appear in the state of humiliation in which he once did. That he will appear the second time in all the pomp and splendour of a God. O how changed! how unlike the babe of Bethlehem! O how unlike the humble, self-denied and lowly stranger, who was ignominiously crucified on Calvary!

2. This looking for his second coming implies not only a firm belief that the Saviour will again appear, but also a strong and ardent desire of that coming; a well-pleasedness with the expectation of being there, and of being received up to glory to be forever with the Lord. O my christian brother or sister, when you reflect on the glory of the saints in the day of judgment, and the signal honors which shall be done them on that eventful occasion, does not your heart grow warm within you, and do you not ardently wish for the coming of the dear Saviour that your sorrow and sighing, and crying, may be at an end, and that you may be raised to the blessed possession of eternal joys?

There may be, and no doubt are, many who believe according to scripture account, that the Saviour will come again. But this coming is so far from being a subject of sweet and delightful reflection; so far from being a matter of strong and ardent desire, that the very thought fills them with horror and they shrink from the prospect with trembling and awe. An unfaithful servant, who has committed fifty faults since his master left home, and who has every thing to fear on his return, may believe just as firmly as his faithful and affectionate mistress, that his master will return; but is there no difference I beseech, between the ways in which these two look for the return of this absent man? The one looks, and fears, and shrinks, and trembles, and deprecates; the other looks, and loves, and and wishes, and desires and prays. The good and faithful wife not only believes that her absent husband, in whose fidelity she trusts with unshaken confidence, will return, but how ardently does she desire that return, and how cordial, how sincere and how affectionate is that welcome she gives him when he comes? Just so, my friends, rest assured, is the looking of the true christian for the return of his absent Saviour.

3. Looking for Christ's second coming, implies that those thus engaged, are also engaged in hearty and diligent preparations for this solemn event. They are girding up the loins of their minds, and trimming their lamps, in the language of the blessed Saviour, like men who wait for the return of their Lord from the marriage. They are endeavoring to cultivate with careful and assiduous hand,

every christian grace, every holy and devout exercise, love, repentance, faith, hope, zeal, &c. &c. How does the nice and tasty wife look for her absent and beloved husband? She not only believes her husband will return, she not only anxiously wishes that return, but prepares for it by setting her house in the nicest order, consulting therein, what she knows to be the taste of her husband, that there may be no circumstance, no, not even the least, to damp or mar their mutual joy and felicity on meeting. Just so with the honest hearted, faithful christian; he endeavors to set the house of his heart in order.

4. Looking for Christ's second coming, implies that the christian thus exercised, does not consider, nor even wish, this world to be his final home, "But is looking for a better country, that is, a heavenly;" Heb. xi, 16.

IV. We are to make some observations on this second and final appearance of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord.

1. One observation we make on this second coming of Christ is, that it will be extremely unlike his first coming, whether we consider the manner in which he will appear, or the design of his coming. When he came first, he came a feeble babe, born of obscure parentage, little noticed by the great and mighty men of this world; except a certain Herod, who sought the young child's life and that he might make sure of taking it, murdered a a number of innocent and unoffending babes. But when he shall appear the second time, it will be with inconceivable pomp and splendour! O how

changed! how unlike the babe of Bethlehem! how unlike the man that groaned on Calvary! He will appear in all the dignity of Almighty God on the throne of his glory, while angels, cherubim and seraphim shall bow at his feet, ambitious of doing him the most signal honors. His second coming will be ineffably glorious and in the clouds of heaven; it will be public and in the view of all, and will strike the most awful terror into the hearts of his enemies; "Behold he cometh in clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, amen." His first appearance was that of a man, his second will be that of a God.

2. His second appearance will be altogether unlike that of his first, with regard to the design of his coming. His first coming was with a view to serve mankind; his second will be to judge them. The design of his first coming, was to shed his precious blood, to make atonement for sin; the design of his second will be to inquire into the improvement they have made of the blood he shed, and all the generous things he did to promote their salvation. The design of his first coming was to fulfil, to honor and magnify the divine law; the design of his second coming will be to execute eternal vengeance on all those who have violated that righteous and holy law and remained impenitent.

3. Another observation I make on this solemn, this eventful coming is, that it will introduce the general judgment. This awful, this august, this

eventful scene, will attend the Saviour's second coming! and so the scriptures manifestly and abundantly teach; "When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left," &c. Mat. xxv, 31—46, inclusive. There shall be collected before the throne of God, and before the son of man seated on that august and splendid throne, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, from Adam to his youngest son. Then shall the fates of all men be fixed, irreversibly fixed, never, never, never to change! Then man's ancient habitation, this terrestrial ball with all its ponderous apparatus, will be dissolved in fiery ruin. Then time, old time itself, shall exist no longer. Days shall cease to roll, the sun to shine and hours to be numbered. Then shall all the sufferings, and sorrows, pains, calamities and trials of God's dear children be at an end. The exiles shall be taken home. Then shall the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest. Then shall the saints of God sorrow and sigh no more. Then shall they complain and groan no more, but soar to heaven and glory, and be forever with the Lord. Then shall they leave the world on fire and ascend to take possession of that glorious kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

1. From the precious subject we have had under

consideration, learn the infinite condescension, kindness, and love of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Did he give himself an offering for sin? O brethren, what love and condescension was manifested here! Did he die for the guilty, for those engaged in hostile rebellion against the throne and government of God? Let us admire and adore such love, and render the most grateful returns.

2. Learn the infinite wisdom and benevolence of God, the eternal father of all! His wisdom shines conspicuously bright in that glorious scheme of saving sinners wherein mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other; Psalm, lxxxv, 10; "His benevolence is conspicuous in giving Christ his blessed son to die, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

3. Learn, who they are that have a right in the sight of Almighty God, to come forward to the table of the Lord and eat bread, and drink wine in commemoration of a Saviour's love, that is, all those who are looking and longing for Christ's second coming. Those whose hearts sweetly aspire to God, and who are affectionately anticipating that eventful day when Christ their Lord shall come.

4. Learn how much, and how plainly, it is the duty of all, and equally their interest, to devote themselves without reserve to the service of God through Jesus Christ. Their duty, because God requires it, who has an undoubted right to lay upon us all his sovereign commandment; because it is the only and exclusive way in which

we can escape everlasting ruin and obtain eternal life; Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved."

5. Learn how awfully solemn and important that eventful day will be, in which the Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the world. O! what pomp, what awful solemnity, will attend that day, that dreadful day! Hear the judgment chariot rolling, hear the angel's trumpet sounding; see the sleeping dead arising, see the books of judgment opening, and the dead, small and great, judged out of the things written in the books. May the Lord of his infinite mercy prepare us all for the joys at his right hand, and then bear the judgment down whenever infinite wisdom sees proper. Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen, and AMEN.

SERMON XV.

FORGETTERS OF GOD SOLEMNLY CALLED TO CONSIDER THEIR DANGER.

Psalm, L, last part of verse 21 & verse 22.

"But I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."

NOTWITHSTANDING the Lord is every where represented in the sacred scriptures as a God of infinite mercy, and who will show abundant compassion to every sincere penitent; yet he is also represented as a God of stern and awful justice, who will by no means acquit the ungodly, and finally impenitent; all who live and die the rejecters of Jesus Christ, and the overtures of divine mercy, will surely reap the fruit of their doings in eternal woe; whilst those, and only those, who forsake their sins shall find pardon; and so far will the mercy of the Deity be from affording any relief to the finally impenitent, that it will be the aggravation of their torment forever; "To the wicked, God saith, I will reprove thee and set them in order before

thine eyes," &c. This psalm contains some most awful threatenings against the wicked and ungodly, and sets forth the things with which God would be delighted in a worshipper, and which he requires as essentially necessary to meet his approbation. In the first part of this chapter, from the first to the fourth verse inclusive, the author gives us an account of almighty God, coming in great glory and majesty to the general judgment; "The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. Out of Zion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him and it shall be very tempestuous round about, he shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may judge his people." But it is to be observed that the almighty Deity issues a command to the ministers of his vengeance to gather his saints together to himself, by making a careful selection before the floods of his wrath were let loose on the guilty mass of human kind. O my brethren! how safe to have the Lord for our portion; how careful is he that no evil shall betide his humble followers in the general conflagration! They shall all have betaken themselves to the sacred shelter of the Saviour's wounds, before the commission shall be given to the floods of divine indignation to overwhelm the guilty with complete destruction; verse 5; "Gather my saints together unto me; those who have made a covenant with me by

sacrifice." The Lord informs us, verse ten and downward, that he will take no bullocks out of our houses, nor he-goats out of our folds, as an atonement for sin, that he needs not these offerings; the cattle on a thousand hills being all his own. That they must be sacrifices of another kind that can meet his approbation; "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows to the most high; and call upon me, in the day of trouble I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me." God then challenges the wicked asking them "What they had to do, taking his statutes in their mouths, seeing they hated instruction and cast his words behind them. He then charges them with deception and giving their tongues to evil; verses 19, 20; "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself;" and then he addresses them in the language of my text; "But I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now, consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."

In treating this subject a little farther, I design,

I. To speak a little of the persons addressed, and show who they are; the forgetters of God.

II. I will endeavour to demonstrate that the Lord will reprove sinners, that he will punish them for their crimes, and that they shall not escape.

III. I will show what it is to comply with the direction here given, namely, to consider this.

IV. I will a little unfold the import of the

punishment threatened, "Lest I tear you in pieces," and also, that none can rescue the sinner from the hand of God, and then conclude with some inferences and application.

I. I am to speak a little of the persons addressed, showing who they are; the forgetters of God.

1. I think all those may be called forgetters of God, who spend their time entirely in business and amusement, and exercise no serious concern about their immortal souls, and their precious salvation. Now, my brethren, how many are there amongst us to whom this observation applies? How many are entirely taken up with business or amusement or both, and scarcely ever spend a serious thought about their souls and eternity? Many are the thoughtless sons of levity, who engaged in the giddy whirl of pleasure, pass from one scene of folly and dissipation to another, quite regardless of their God. These people certainly are in the full and complete sense of my text, forgetters of God.

2. I presume they who live without prayer to God, may with great propriety be said to be forgetters of God; is it not too manifest to be denied when men never call upon God by prayer and supplication, that the Deity is very little in their thoughts. Had he the place there which he ought to hold, and were they mindful of their creator and preserver as they ought to be, would they not be engaged in calling upon his venerable name, and is it not to be fairly presumed, they would be careful thus to cultivate a growing acquaintance with him? But where there is no

prayer, there is no grateful recollection of the Redeemer.

3. Those who neglect the public ordinances of God's house, his public worship, the precious seals of his gracious covenant, the assembling themselves together, chanting the praises of God, &c. may with great propriety be said to be forgetters of God. When that sacred day of rest, hallowed by heaven itself, and set apart by Jehovoah for his own peculiar worship, instead of being thus sacredly employed, is devoted to recreation, business, carnal pleasure, worldly pursuits, paying and receiving visits, I presume it may be fairly said that the persons thus engaged are forgetters of God. Who can have any other opinion according to God's holy word? Can that individual be properly affected toward Jehovah, who has no strict regard to his sacred word and his divine authority?

4. I presume those are forgetters of God, who take no pains to obtain the knowledge of God and religion, who do not endeavour to acquaint themselves with the sacred truths of christianity, who neglect the bible, or lay it by for a novel or romance, and that, too, even on the hallowed hours of sacred rest. These things we know are often done. Numbers of the few amongst us who may be men of some reading, employ very little of their time in seaching their bibles, or inquiring into the sacred contents of that holy book. Now, brethren, does not this look very much indeed like forgetting God? "Consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver.

5. Those forget God whose practice is grossly wicked and who appear to care but little what they do, provided they can secrete their conduct from the public eye, and escape the censure of the world; those who draw the sable curtain of midnight between their crimes and the public eye, forgetting that the pure, the holy and vigilant eye of him who never slumbers nor sleeps, is looking on; adulterers thieves, &c. But let those poor, thoughtless and unreflecting sinners know, that even the thickest gloom of midnight darkness is all broad daylight, and like the very blaze of noon before those all-penetrating eyes with which they have to do, and which are taking the strictest notice of all their conduct; "Now consider this, you that forget God."

II. I am to demonstrate that God will reprove sinners, that he will punish them for their crimes and they shall not escape.

1. God's own precious word most loudly, plainly and unequivocally asserts this; Psalm, xi, 6; "On the wicked God shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup;" Psalm, ix, 17; "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" Prov. xi, 21; "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished;" Isaiah, xxx, 33; "For tophet is ordained of old, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord God like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it;" Jeremiah, xi, 6; "Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord, I

am weary with holding in ; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and on the assembly of the young men together ; for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days ;" Rev. xxi, 8 ; " But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."

2. From the very perfections of the Deity we may fairly and reasonably conclude that God will punish the wicked and they shall not escape. They have rejected all the calls of his mercy, and this we are assured will never reach them now. God's holiness will induce him to punish the sinner forever ; for he has a perfect detestation of all sin ; and cannot look upon it without the utmost abhorrence. Surely, then, the ungodly shall be reproved and shall not escape. His justice will require their condemnation, and as he has already threatened it, they shall not escape.— The punishment will indubitably be inflicted. His omnipotence will enable him to inflict the punishment the culprit deserves, omnipotence is all his own ; Job, ix, 4 ; " He is wise in heart and mighty in strength, who hath hardened himself against him and prospered ;" 19 ; " If I speak of strength, lo he is strong."

3. The dignity and rights of the divine government will require the punishment of sinners and they shall not escape. They have violated the laws of heaven and defied the Almighty.— They have endeavoured, as far as in them lay to

overturn the government of God. Indeed, sirs, it is of the very nature of all sin to overturn the divine government, were it possible. O how aggravated! That the sinner is not able to succeed, lessens not his crime, seeing he will be judged and proceeded against not according to his power and might, but according to the designs of his heart. Now, sirs, is not that a mean and contemptible government that will suffer its laws to be infracted with impunity? Would any wise and good man wish to live under such a government amongst men? And permit me to ask shall the adorable God have less regard to the dignity and honor of his government, than his feeble creature man? Is it asked then how any can escape, according to these principles, seeing all have assuredly sinned? I answer, that those, and those only, will escape, who embrace the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven amongst men whereby we must be saved." Jesus Christ has borne the curse of the law on the sinner's behalf; Isaiah, liii, 5; "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed." Now the blessed Lord Jesus, having thus taken the law place of the sinner and having sustained the vengeance due to sin, the Lord forgives him for the sake of that blessed Saviour who was wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities; but there

is no other way in which sinners can escape the vengeance of the law.

III. I am to show what it is to comply with the direction given in my text; "Consider this."

This is for the sinner to turn his attention to the threatened indignation of the Lord, and make a suitable improvement of the same. The sinner ought to consider the great danger of forgetting and neglecting God. The impossibility in that case of escaping his vengeance due to sin; that these must eventually overtake him and be his intolerable portion forever. He ought also, seriously to consider the intolerableness of everlasting woe, and how "fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God;" Heb. x, 31. The folly, the madness, and unreasonableness of his sinful courses. O what folly marks the sinner's path! Sinking his precious soul to everlasting woe, and for what? A mere dream of happiness, a shadow of felicity, and nothing more! The pleasures of sin for a season. Was there ever equal folly, was there ever equal madness? The sinner who rejects and violates the laws of his God is acting the most foolish part, of which we can conceive. He is not a happier man for violating heaven's righteous and holy laws, than he would be if he kept those laws. Nay, he is manifestly diminishing his own happiness. This will be the manifest result of neglecting his duty, and of consequence, it must operate to the diminution of his happiness. But, my friends, judge ye if the sinner has every thing to lose and nothing at all

to gain by pursuing sinful courses, is he not acting the most foolish part to put things to hazard there? Who can justify his conduct? But, sirs, even suppose the sinner could ensure as much happiness from his sinful courses, as his own fervid imagination ever anticipated, still he could not be justified and his conduct might be marked as the extremity of folly. It would be letting go the greater for the lesser good, which will certainly be viewed by all men who think correctly, as the perfection of folly. The dictate of wisdom appears to be this; if two things that are good are in our offer and we cannot secure both, let us abandon the lesser, and cleave earnestly to the greater. What unreasonableness marks the sinner's course! Is it not most perfectly unreasonable that a moral agent, dependent, entirely dependent, on almighty God for all he enjoys, should abandon and relinquish the service of that almighty being on whom he is dependent, and to whom he is under the most solemn obligations, for the sake of that foul fiend, who is the adversary of God and man, and withal, endeavoring to lead him down to darkness and the pit. Let him consider farther, the abundant and merciful provision made in the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ and published in the gospel of divine grace, for the salvation of lost sinners, and the graciousness of God's call to accept the same. That if he perishes the fault is exclusively his own; that no part of the blame will directly or indirectly attach to God; hat he ought to accept of Jesus

Christ as offered in the gospel, and forsake all his sinful courses.

IV. I am a little to unfold the import of the punishment threatened in my text; "Lest I tear you in pieces," and also that none can rescue from the hand of God; "Lest I tear you in pieces;" this communicates the idea of the most complete and dreadful destruction. The language is figurative, and plainly imports the sinner's final overthrow. This will consist, for one thing, in his being cut off from all sources of happiness and enjoyment; in the accusations of his own conscience forever, which is the worm that never dies, spoken of by Jesus Christ; Mark, ix, 44; "Where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." In the inflictions of the divine wrath which is the unquenchable fire, in the passage above quoted, there can be no doubt but the soul will be most intolerably and inconceivably miserable under these dreadful circumstances. These torments, O! sinners, will be intolerable beyond degree. Whatever the great God does, he does it like himself, and in the most effectual manner. How inconceivably deplorable then, when it shall be the very design of Deity to show his wrath, and make his power known in the destruction of the sinner? What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, "endured, with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," "and there be none to deliver." Who can deliver from the Lord God of hosts? Who can rescue from his Almighty hand?

Omnipotence is all his own; "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?" Job, ix, 4. He is that almighty God who laid the foundations of the earth and stretched out the heavens as a curtain; he it is who lights up the sun and rolls the planets in their orbits; he holds all things in his hand, and supports universal nature. Then, certainly, any expectations of deliverance from his awful arrests would be nugatory to the very last degree.

1. Learn from this subject the great reason there is to fear, that the number of those amongst us who forget God is very great. How many are spending their time in mere amusement and carnal pleasure, to the almost entire exclusion of serious reflection? How many are neglecting the worship of God in the closet? My friends, let your consciences answer this question; it is easily answered. Do you not live without God in the world? You know you do not bow your knee to the Deity in retirement. You live without secret prayer and you cannot deny it. Now, my prayerless friends, will you give me leave to reason a little with you on this interesting subject. Can you be qualified for heaven while in this prayerless situation? Should you be called from this to another world while in this prayerless condition, could it be well with you? Could a prayerless soul be happy in the enjoyment of God? Must not the soul have a taste for the object proposed to enjoyment before it can be happy in that enjoyment? But while ever the soul remains prayerless

there is certainly no taste for heavenly objects; consequently, heaven could not be enjoyed in that temper of mind. How many amongst us show that we are forgetters of God by neglecting his sacred word? Does not the holy bible lie by us from day to day and from week to week, without being consulted? Does not this too plainly show that we are forgetters of God? "Now, consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."

2. Learn the awful danger of those forgetters of God. The Lord will reprove them, as his word expressly declares, and they shall not escape. His very perfections stand bound to see them punished; neither is there any who can deliver. Poor, forgetful men and women, you are gliding down the stream of life, forgetful of your God, forgetful of your souls, and forgetful of your danger. But for this forgetfulness and inattention, you are nothing the safer. Your destruction is hastening on and will eventually overtake you, unless you repent and believe the gospel; Deut. xxxii, 35; "To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." O! forgetters of God, consider your danger before it is too late; flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold of the hope set before you in the gospel of divine grace. O sinners, why will you delay your flight to the ark of safety? Mercy calls, heaven invites, the bowels of divine compassion yearn, angels pity, saints pray, Jesus intercedes, the spirit moves,

and are you capable of standing it out still? O God, move upon their hearts effectually by thine almighty power, and draw reluctant hearts to thee.

3. Learn the indispensible necessity of sinners taking into solemn consideration the things that belong to their peace before it is too late. In this way they may escape the vengeance due to sin, and they can do it in no other way. To oppose the vindictive vengeance of almighty God, will be weakness; to attempt to flee from it will be madness, and to endure that divine wrath, which will be the impenitent sinner's portion forever, will be intolerable. How necessary then, O sinners, to consider these things now before it be too late. Why, my dear friends, careless forgetters of God, will ye die? Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why, then, is not the hurt of the daughter of my people healed? Is there any fatal necessity that you should die? Is there not plenteous provision made for your salvation? What prevents your acceptance of the offered mercy. Nothing, I presume, sirs, but an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. If, then, ye forgetters of God, you eventually die, the fault is your own; you will never be able to cause it to attach any where else. Be persuaded ye careless and secure, to be up and doing while it is called to-day. You are not yet consigned to the blackness of darknes; then give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. So shall it be well with you. AMEN.

SERMON XVI.

THE DISCIPLES INTERROGATED ON THE SUBJECT OF APOSTACY.

John, VI, 67, latter clause.

"Will ye also go away?"

THESE words were addressed by our Lord Jesus Christ to his twelve apostles at a time when sundry persons, who had attached themselves to the blessed Redeemer, professing to be his followers, took offence at some of his declarations and went away, and walked no more with him. The connection is as follows: The blessed Jesus having spoken of himself to his disciples as the bread of life of which whosoever eat should not perish, many of his professed followers took offence at it, "saying this is a hard saying, who can hear it?" They became offended at the Saviour, and began seriously to meditate abandoning his cause, which resolution they fully adopted before very long. When Jesus knew they were displeased with his saying, he asked them if this offended them, what they would think of it if they should see the son of man ascend up where he was before? He condescends in the subsequent verses to explain himself, telling them they were

to understand him as speaking spiritually; but in his explanation he gave them worse offence than ever, at which they absolutely revolted, went back, and walked no more with him; 63—66; "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not; for Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not and who should betray him; and he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given him of my father." This doctrine of the divine sovereignty completed the offence; "For from that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." The doctrine of the divine sovereignty fairly and lucidly stated, is a doctrine that gives great offence to carnal and unrenewed men; and it appears to have done so in every age of the world. This doctrine is what gave the highest offence here. The Saviour's declaration that man must eat his flesh, and that whoever did so should never perish, was offensive; at this these pretended followers began to think of drawing back; but it was not until the friends of the Saviour preached up most plainly and unequivocally, the doctrine of divine sovereignty that they decidedly took the resolution of withdrawing; and they accordingly walked no more with him. This being the case, the blessed redeemer interrogated the twelve in the language of my text, "Will ye also go away?" From this view of the subject it appears that some attached themselves to Christ

in the day of his incarnation, and professed to be his followers for a time, who afterward took offence at the blessed Saviour, and withdrew themselves, and walked no more with him. As it was in the days of the Saviour's incarnation, so is it yet; many professors of religion turn back again to the world and walk no more with him. I propose to show;

I. Who may be said to be going away from the Saviour, and turning their backs upon this cause, or have actually gone.

II. Point out some of the most prevailing causes of this treatment of the blessed Jesus and his sacred religion.

III. Point out the extreme danger of treating the Saviour and his cause thus; and then conclude with an improvement of the subject.

I. I am to show who may be said to be going away from the blessed Saviour, or have actually gone.

1. Many who once made a profession of religion, are gone over to the side of infidelity and irreligion, and have thoroughly rejected the reign of the divine redeemer. They despise the sacred scriptures; they contemn the holy cause of God; they deride the followers of the lowly Saviour, and do despite to the spirit of grace. These, sirs, are not only manifesting symptoms of going away; they are already clean gone, so they expressly tell us, so we plainly discover from their conduct, for we often see them glorying in their shame

2. When people have made a public profession of religion, and afterward become so careless

about the holy cause of God, that they feel no desire for communion with God, with the blessed Jesus, and with the people of the most high, I think the symptoms of going away are very manifest and strong. Peradventure, some may be ready to plead in justification of their conduct here, who have withdrawn themselves from the communion of the church, that their hearts are still well affected to the cause of God, and are there, though they have voluntarily vacated their seats at the communion table. They allege they have good cause to do so, because there is something wrong in the proceedings of the church or its officers. I would just observe to such persons, that they ought to consider well what they are doing, and be quite certain that their ground of exception is just and will stand the test, not only in the world but at God's bar. Let them particularly remember that they have taken a solemn oath to be true to the cause of God and religion, and that it must be something very serious indeed which will justify them in looking on with the non-professing world while christians are sealing their covenant engagements to their God. What conclusion must and will the spectators draw on such an occasion? Will it not be that these people who now stand back, and whom they have repeatedly seen heretofore at a communion table, have taken offence at the blessed Jesus and his cause. Let such farther consider, if a man during a national war, enlists in the service of his country, and takes an oath to be true to the cause, and should afterward take it into his head

that his officer does not do quite the best way, is he at liberty to withdraw himself from the service at pleasure, and render for reason that the officer did not do right; and who in the interim is judge of the officer's conduct? The dissatisfied soldier himself. Would the soldier under such circumstances be justifiable in retiring from the service? or would he be taken up as a deserter, and punished according to military law? The latter we all know. But, sirs, what is the situation of the christian professor? Is he not a soldier, solemnly sworn too, having voluntarily enlisted into the holy service of the captain general of christian salvation? Hath he not voluntarily and of his own free will and seeking, taken an oath of allegiance to his holy Saviour. Is not this the very meaning of the word sacrament? Now, shall this sworn soldier leave the service at will, and that on the pretence of some fault found with the officers of the church, making himself the sole judge of the conduct of the said officers, and that too, peradventure, where the whole church is entirely satisfied with the conduct of the officers, with the exception of himself alone? Brethren, these things ought not so to be. Here are threatening symptoms of going away.

When those who have made a profession of religion and have hitherto been punctual and regular in their attendance on public worship, and the ordinances of God's house, are now become careless and indifferent about publick worship, attending but seldom in the course of the year, I presume it looks very much like going away.

These persons, or some of them, may not have withdrawn from the communion of the church; they still claim their place at the table of the Lord, or get their children baptised, as the case may be, but seldom attend worship at any other time. This mere occasional attendance does not satisfy me that the heart of such occasional worshipper is as it should be in the sight of God. I am constrained from my views of holy writ to view the subject thus: Public worship is an ordinance of God and of divine appointment. God's ordinances are the meeting places between himself and his friends, and are designed for comforting, quickening, and building up his people. If so, ought they not to be dear to the saints of God, and waited on with strict punctuality? If I eat my dinner heartily on Sunday, am I willing to live on that and do without any more dinner until Sunday returns again? Do I not wish to eat my dinner on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, &c. as well as on Sunday; and do not you likewise, my friend? Apply this to the case in hand, my negligent friend. It is very easily done. Let those who are in the habit of neglecting public worship, compare their exercises with those of the psalmist, on this subject; Psalm, lxxxiv, 10; "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand, I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." And indeed this psalm throughout is very much in point on this subject.

4. I think it may be said those persons show strong symptoms of going away, who have given

over the regular discharge of those family duties which God requires, and which they once regularly discharged; however punctual they may be in their attendance on public worship; say family prayer. Many persons we have known, who once performed prayer regularly in their families who have now given the matter entirely over, and perform it no more. This looks much like going away.

5. We presume those individuals have forsaken Christ who have given over closet prayer, that is, secret devotion. Many who were once very regular and punctual in the discharge of retired prayer, now no longer keep up their assignations with high heaven on this subject, but are living without God in the world. Does not this look very much like going away, or rather, does it not appear as though they were already gone? Can we according to scripture principles and teaching, believe him to be a man of genuine piety, who never devoutly worships God in retirement? Are any of my hearers to whom these observations so plainly apply, ready to answer me, they have not given out prayer, though it is true enough they do not bow their knees to God as aforetime. When they lie down on their beds they commend themselves to God by ejaculatory prayer, imploring his blessing upon them, before they dare to close their eyes in slumbers. Let me ask such professed followers of the blessed Jesus, if they do really think this is coming up to the Saviour's meaning when he directs them to enter into their closets and shut their doors about them; Mat. vi,

6; "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Now, sirs, can we rationally suppose that this direction is ever complied with, in the spirit of it, in the listless and indolent manner aforementioned? Had Daniel, that faithful, honest hearted servant of the Lord, contented himself with this kind of prayer, he might have prayed to the day of his death, without ever having been accused to the Babylonian monarch of having violated his majesty's decree. Who could ever have known that the favourite courtier prayed thus. But did Daniel content himself with this kind of prayer even when his life was at stake, and he knew it; Daniel, vi, 10; "Now, when Daniel knew the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime." Here is the exercise of stout and sterling piety and virtue. This is going farther than praying on the pillow. It is praying on the knee, and that in the face of danger eminent. Not but what I think well of praying on the pillow too; and I presume all men of genuine piety pray there, and pray much there, but not to the supplanting prayer in the closet and on the knee.

6. I think they may be said to be going away or actually to have gone, out of choice, associate with profane, wicked and ungodly men,

notwithstanding, they keep up all these forms. It is certainly a very dark sign, with regard to a professor's sincerity, when men of wicked and debauched lives, and profane, unhallowed language, are their choice companions. I insinuate no reflections on men of business, for going into any company into which their lawful business calls them. But if the business of true christians call them into the company of wicked and profane men, I think they will do it as I do mine, in the rain. I have rode in the rain often, where I felt imperiously called by my duty; but never rode a single mile in it for the mere sake of getting wet.

II. We are to enquire a little into the prevailing causes of persons thus going away from the Lord Jesus Christ, who have professed his religion, and attached themselves to his holy cause.

1. One great reason is that their hearts never were savingly changed. It appears in their case that the seed sown fell upon stony ground; Mark, iv, 5, 6; "And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprung up; because it had no depth of earth, and when the sun was up it was scorched, because it had no depth of earth, and withered away." This, I presume, sirs, is the case with many professors of religion. The seed sown falls on stony ground. The man's natural passions became softened by some means, he felt tender, his feelings were, for the time being, highly excited, he had soft sympathetic feelings, which he never had before. These exercises he took to be religion; he very hastily made a profession; and every

thing was overspread by novelty. While this was the case he went on quite steadily. But when the novelty wore off, and the natural passions so highly excited by some cause, merely natural too, subsided, having no real heart holiness, not being changed by grace, he turned his back on the blessed and holy Saviour and went away. Now, sirs, this want of a real saving change, in this particular case, appears to be the great and prevailing cause why this man hath gone away. And I do most sincerely believe that this very hasty and unreflecting manner of many people, in uniting themselves with a christian church, is one of the most prevalent causes amongst us of so many going back, and walking no more with him.

2. Another reason is this, where there is not true grace and the genuine and unfeigned love of God in the heart. Persons professing religion are very apt to grow weary of its holy duties. Reading the sacred scriptures, praying, attending public worship, waiting on christian communions, &c. grow quite wearisome; therefore, the man goes back, and walks no more with the blessed Saviour. When they first make a profession of religion, the novelty of the thing, and some regard to the consistency of their character, may induce them to persevere for a time, but they will seldom hold out very long. In the case of many professors of religion, "The seed has fallen among thorns;" the thorns grow up and choke it presently. The seed brings no fruit: though it springs up for a while as well as that sown on the good ground.

3. Another thing which operates with many is the principle of shame. They cannot bear the reproaches of the world, nor to differ so far from it. When they look around them, they discover at once that the multitude of mankind have nothing to do with religion, but to neglect and deride it, or to exercise the spirit of persecution. Amongst this multitude, they see the greater part of the leading men in society. They begin to ask themselves the following questions: what are we, that we should differ so far from this multitude, and from these great men? Is it not probable, at least, that these men of elevated standing in society, and many of them men of literature too, know better than we do, what is right? Thus, sir, they go away. Let us now consult the Apostle John, and obtain his opinion on the subject of such men going away. With that opinion he has favoured the christian world long since; I Epistle general of John, ii, 19; "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us."

4. Another reason why numbers go back and walk no more with the Saviour is, that the gospel and its sacred principles lay too great a restraint on their gratifications and desires. This restraint they are no longer willing to bear, though from certain principles they have borne it for a time, yet not having the root of the matter in them, they at length determine to submit to these unpleasant restraints no longer.

5. The great reason which lies at the bottom of the whole matter, is the native enmity of the heart against God; Rom. viii, 7; "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." Now, the heart never having been thoroughly changed; but having put on a restraint for some time only, the native enmity will arise again, and cast off all restraints. And therefore it is that so many go away.

III. We are to represent the danger of persons in this situation. Those who are in it are exposed to danger the most dreadful. "Will ye also go away?" Persons who have once acted under the restraints of religious principle in some measure, but who were not really engaged in the sacred business, have not found it the most agreeable, and when they have laid aside every thing like religion and religious exercise, they are wont to felicitate themselves on their happy condition, and rejoice in what they call their happy freedom from religious restraint. But poor vain mortals, have they considered the end of the matter? To whom shall they go, seeing they walk no longer with the blessed Jesus? "He hath the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that he is the son of the living God." Have these men vainly flattered themselves that there is no reality in religion, and of course no solemn reckoning hereafter? Have they flattered themselves that the Lord is a God all mercy, and that if there be a hereafter, all shall be happy together, that the Lord is a God too generous, too benevolent

and good, to send the reasonable creatures himself has made to everlasting perdition. Vain and foolish men! do they allege that the Deity receives mankind into heaven by mere random, without any regard to moral and religious character, or any fitness for that celestial place. Shall the base adulterer then take but one step from the bed of defilement, to the pure and holy regions of eternal bliss? Shall the drunkard all dozed, and bloated, and stupified, as he is, ascend at once from the bowl of ebriety to the holy regions of eternal glory, without the least suitable preparation for those exalted climes? Shall the dark assassin, acceptably approach the throne of God in heaven with his bloody dirk or dagger in his hand and take up his eternal abode in the pure regions of spotless perfection? Will hands reeking with the blood of his fellow men, recommend him to the just Judge of the universe, and procure him acceptance with the Almighty? Shall the judgments of righteous heaven, the decisions of the eternal and unerring God, be administered in the wicked spirit, and according to the maxims of worldly honour, falsely so called? Can any man possessed of common understanding ever bring himself to acquiesce in such a shocking conclusion? Or is not taking away the life of a fellow man, otherwise than according, and in obedience to, the laws of the state, murder? Will any worldly maxims or regulations adopted by wicked and ungodly men alter the nature of moral right and wrong, or set aside the immutable laws of the immortal God? Or has the Deity two codes of

laws? One for the great mass of mankind, and another for those showy men who are pleased to assume to themselves the name of honourable men, whether they merit the appellation or not; and a great number of whom the world never thought more honorable than their neighbours? But now let backsliders, and wicked men of every description, and duellists amongst the rest, attend to God's holy word and hear their danger! Thus saith the Lord; Heb. x, 38: "If any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him;" "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" Psalm, ix, 17; "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup;" Psalm, xi, 6; "Tophet is ordained of old, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood; and the breath of the Lord God like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it;" Isaiah, xxx, 33; "Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you;" Acts, xxxix, 41; "But those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me." Here are the express declarations of sacred writ, with regard to backsliders, and all wicked and ungodly men, and rest assured that according to these things will the general judgment be administered and not according to the false maxims of wicked and ungodly men.

Now with respect to the danger of those who have gone away, it lies here. They have left the one only Saviour, and to whom can they go for deliverance? verse 68 Compare Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven, by which we can be saved." We view their case as more dangerous than those who never made a profession of religion at all.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Let us improve this subject by way of examination. Have we gone away from Christ? Let every professor of religion in the assembly examine himself with the strictest candour. Have any of us, dear brethren, gone over to the side of irreligion? Do we sit in the seat of the scorner, or walk in the counsels of the ungodly? I hope most in the assembly can put a negative on this question. I do charitably hope there may be none in this house, with respect to whom this is the case. But, sirs, how is the matter with respect to other things? Have none of us any symptoms of going away from the blessed Saviour upon us? Are there none in the assembly who have been careless about communion with God and his people? Are there none who have left vacant their seats at the table of the Lord? If there be any such, should it be but one, let him consider well his duty, and let him realise, it is not a small matter which will justify him in this. Let him return to his duty and guard most strictly against backsliding.

How is the matter with respect to the public worship of God? Have we become careless and

remiss about waiting on the ordinances of divine institution? Or are the dwellings of Zion still dear to our souls? Can we say with the psalmist, "a day in thy courts is better than a thousand?" "Happy they who pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper who love her;" Psalm, cxxii, 6.

How stands the matter with respect to family religion? Have we laid aside that family religion which we once maintained, or are we still punctual in our assignations with our God? The candid answer of this question may go far to determine our present spiritual standing. How is it, my dear friends, with respect to closet devotions? Is it neglected, or regularly performed with steadiness, uniformity and delight? Who are our choice companions, the saints of God or the wicked and irreligious? If the latter, the evidence is strongly against us.

2. My dear friends, suffer the word of exhortation. Will ye also go away? Stop and reflect most seriously, ye who turn your backs on the Saviour, ye are yet on this side the world of ruin. You are not consigned to the shades of darkness. Your case, though discouraging, is not altogether desperate. We hope the almighty God has not yet lifted his hand to swear in his wrath that ye shall not enter into his rest. Nay, he is encouraging you to return from your backslidings; Jer. iii, 22; "Return unto me ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."

3. Let God's own dear people take occasion from such a subject as this, to double their

diligence, and take good heed lest there be in any of them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" I Cor. x, 12; "Let us exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you should be hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin; Heb. iii, 13. My beloved brothers and sisters, you are not yet in heaven. You are far from home, and in an enemy's country; "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time since the days are evil; Ephes. v, 15. There is great need for vigilance and care. Your enemies are numerous and mighty, subtle and full of rage. The devil, the world, and the flesh, are all combined against you. A combination much more powerful than that at Waterloo. O let christians look well to their ways, that they be not deceived by the great subtlety of their enemies. And what the blessed Saviour says, he says unto all; WATCH. May the Lord so enable all his dear children to watch, that they may finish their course with joy and receive eventually a crown of glory. Then to his name shall be ascribed the glory forever. AMEN.

SERMON XVII.

THE ADVENT OF JESUS CHRIST INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.

I. Timothy, I, 15.

"*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.*"

IN St. Paul, the author of these words, and of this letter, we have as great a contrast exhibited as relates to religious exercises, as occurs in the experience and character of any one man that ever lived. One time he is set forth as a fiery, persecuting zealot, doing every thing in the compass of his power against the name of Jesus of Nazareth; Acts, ix, 1, 2; "And Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus, to the Synagogues, that if he should find any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." Anon, we see him sitting humbly at the feet of the same Jesus, "determined to know nothing among them save Christ and him crucified;" I. Cor. ii, 2. At one

time we see him guarding their clothes, who stoned Stephen, the proto-martyr to death;" Acts, vii, 58; "And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul." And again we hear him crying out that he himself was ready to be offered, that is, to be a martyr in the same glorious cause;" I. Tim. iv, 6; "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." So great was the change which took place in this eminent servant of the Lord; and he appears still to have retained a deep sense of his sinful state and to have been deeply humbled before God on account of the same! He seldom mentions the abounding grace of God without recording it as extending signally to himself, and never fails to rank himself amongst the chief of sinners. This he does most expressly in the words of my text; "This is a faithful saying, &c. &c. The connection of my text is this: The apostle having spoken in the 1st and 2nd verses of this chapter of his call to the christian ministry, proceeds verse 4th to direct Timothy in his conduct, and to inform him of the great design of God's law to the 11th. From the 11th verse and downward he speaks of the glorious gospel of God, the Saviour, and magnifies the divine grace which had extended to himself; "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." The following propositions appear fairly suggested, and contained in the words of my text:

I. That Jesus Christ, a divine person, once came into our world.

II. That his great and special design in coming into the world was to save sinners.

III. That these truths are worthy of all acceptation, that is, that every soul hearing of Jesus Christ ought to embrace and ardently love him. What I design in the sequel of this discourse is, to illustrate each of these propositions, and that in the order in which I have mentioned them, and then conclude with some inferences.

I. We are to illustrate this truth, that Jesus Christ, a divine person, once came into our world. By Jesus Christ coming into the world I mean his appearing in human flesh and conversing with mankind from day to day. Now, all we can learn with certainty about the truth of this proposition we must learn from the sacred word. There are many subjects in theology to prove and confirm which, we may reason very fairly and conclusively from the works of nature around us; for example, the existence, the infinite wisdom and almighty power of the Deity. But, sirs, when the question relates to the existence of an almighty saviour, and the terms on which an offended God will be reconciled to offending sinners, the sun, moon, and stars, and all the planetary hosts are silent as the very grave. Here we must acknowledge ourselves entirely indebted to divine revelation. Here we shall show that there did appear in the land of Judea about eighteen hundred years ago a certain extraordinary person, called Jesus Christ.

2. That this Christ was a divine person, the son of God, equal with the eternal Father. The first of these is conceded by all who profess to believe the christian religion; the second is not. Let us now attend to the plain scripture testimony of the Saviour's birth; Mat. i, 18—25; "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost, then Joseph her husband being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately But while he thought on these things behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first born son; and he called his name Jesus." This plainly shows that Jesus Christ was born, and came into this world. Chapter 4th of Mat. informs us of his being led up of the spirit into he wilderness, where he was forty days and forty nights tempted of the devil. See the chapter at large. Chapters 5, 6, and 7, detail one of his sacred discourses. Then certainly there can be no doubt, that there existed such a man as Jesus Christ, provided the evangelical history is to be accredited. But to call into question the

truth of the evangelical history while we credit any history, is too partial and uncandid, to be admitted by any sober enquirer. We have altogether as good reason to believe the evangelical history, as any other history in the world. It appears to be written with as much artlessness, simplicity, and sincerity, as any other history we have ever read. Yea, such is the honesty and candour of the sacred writers, they record plainly and without disguise, their own faults, and those of their brethren ; a plain manifestation of truth and candour. There is a book existing amongst us called the New Testament. This book did begin to exist, it is not eternal. This is self evident. Now, if men would be impious enough to write such lies as the New Testament details, provided it be not correct history, would there be no body found honest enough to contradict those falsehoods? Could it be imposed on the world at any subsequent period? This we would find to be utterly impossible. Suppose I should write and have it printed and offered as truth to the world, that on the 6th day of June 1819, I saw a man raised out of his grave, who had been four days dead, that I conversed with him in the presence of five hundred people, all plainly hearing the conversation. Could I possibly persuade the people of Murfreesborough and vicinity that this is true, contrary to all the testimony of their senses, when they were present on the day aforesaid, and knew that no such thing took place. Let such a wicked trick be tried when it will, we shall find no such thing can be effected. Neither could it be done

any more when the evangelical history was written than now.

The evangelical writings have existed from the early ages of christianity, and have been appealed to unanimously by all christian sects and parties, as the great umpire of their theological debates; then the book must have existed this long; it must of necessity be as old as the appeals that are made to it; and a little older. The christians prevailed very much, and at a very early period of the Roman empire. They were quite numerous, even as early as the days of Trajan, who ascended the imperial throne in the 98th year of the christian era.

Many letters are yet extant, which passed between Trajan and Pliny, respecting the christians. About the middle of the second century, Celsus, a heathen philosopher, wrote a treatise against christianity, and was largely answered by Origen, one of the fathers of the christian church. In this treatise Celsus has these words, "I could say many things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and those, too, written by his own disciples, but I purposely omit them." Again, says Celsus, "These things have I alleged from your own writings." The conclusion then is certainly a fair one, that such writings must have existed.

2. On this proposition we were also to show that Jesus Christ, whom we preach unto you, was God's son, the lord of life and glory. Notwithstanding all christians are agreed that there did appear in the land of Judea, about eighteen hundred years ago, a very extraordinary

person, called Jesus Christ; yet, all professing christians are not so well agreed, who and what this extraordinary person was; some asserting according to their views that he was very God, possessed of equal power, dignity, and glory, with God the eternal father. Others positively deny his divinity, maintaining that he is nothing more than a mere creature. On this interesting subject "I also will show my opinion," and something of the grounds on which that opinion is founded. My opinion then is that Jesus Christ is very God, equal in dignity, power, and glory with the eternal father.

1. My opinion is founded on his miraculous conception. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost;" compare verse 23rd of this same chapter, "Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us." Here, then, the express declaration of the angel is, that his name shall be Emmanuel, that is, God with us. And does not the evangelist St. Matthew state expressly, that he was born in pursuance of this direction. Are we not fairly warranted then in believing him to be God, a divine person.

2. I believe him to be a divine person, on his own express declaration; John, ix, 35—38; "Jesus heard that they had cast him out and when

he found him he said dost thou believe on the son of God? He said unto him, who is he Lord that I might believe on him? Jesus said unto him thou hast both seen him, and he it is that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord I believe, and he worshipped him." Now, could it have been proper in the Saviour to have received this worship had he not been a divine person, and of course the proper object of worship? "I and my father are one;" John, x, 30. And did not the blessed Jesus well establish this claim by the most incontestible miraculous operations? And is not this the very ground on which he requires the belief of his divinity. Consult this same 10th chapter from the 31st to the 38th verse inclusive.

3. I believe the divinity of the Saviour, and so ought every other man to do, on the express and unequivocal assertions of several apostles on this subject, but more especially St. Paul, "Who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" Phil. ii, 6; "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" Col. iii, 9. Now, sirs, what is the Godhead, but the divine nature or essence? See the celebrated Doct. John's definition of the word. Then the apostle's assertion is, that Jesus Christ is possessed of the fulness of the divine nature, which is, that he is a divine person and really, strictly and literally, God. Compare I. Tim. iii, 16; "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles,

believed on in the world, received up into glory." This needs no commentary. It is about as plain as it can be.

4. I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, from the circumstance of his being uniformly set forth in the New Testament as the great and final judge of angels and men; Mat. xxv, 31; "When the son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations," &c. See the process of this judgment, to the end of the chapter. Now, who in his sober senses can be induced to believe, that a mere creature is qualified to judge the secrets of all hearts? Let Socinianism shut its mouth, and be still.

II. I am to show that the Saviour's design was to save sinners. In illustrating this proposition I shall prove it to be true from sacred writ. 2. Demonstrate that mankind stood in absolute need of such a Saviour. 3. That he saves by making atonement for transgression.

1. We are to prove it to be true from scripture. It was declared by the angel, who announced to Joseph the virgin's miraculous pregnancy, his name should be called Jesus because he should "save his people from their sins." Jesus Christ himself expressly declares his design; Luke, xix, 10. Compare John iii, 16, 17; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world;

but that the world through him might be saved." Compare John xii, 47; "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world but to save the world. This point is so plain that I presume farther quotations are quite unnecessary.

2. We show the need mankind stand in of such a saviour. They were fallen sinners agreeably to the sacred scriptures, and matter of undoubted fact; Rom. v, 12; "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Does not matter of fact loudly proclaim the same? Look on all ranks and degrees of mankind from the king on the throne to the servant at the mill. Are not the evidences of deep corruption and total depravity, clear, strong and undeniable? Witness their violations of the divine law in a thousand forms, their feuds, animosities, and contentions, injustice, revenge, avarice, ambition, impurity, and supreme selfishness. Do not all these prove them to be dreadfully depraved? Yea, altogether as much so as the scriptures represent them. I believe some people do not like the Bible because it gives so dreadful a representation of human nature. If it gives no worse a representation of mankind than they actually deserve, this ought not to furnish the least objection to this holy book; and in fact, it is one amongst the many evidences on which I believe the Bible to be from God, and of divine authority. The Bible represents human kind just as I find them, in a state of total and entire depravity.

Therefore, I believe it to be from God. Hear one or two of its representations, and compare them with matters of fact of your own acquaintance, and see how far they accord; Jeremiah, ix, 4, 5; "Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother, for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive, every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongues to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity." And have you and I known nothing take place in society fully up to this dreadful picture of human depravity? Do you answer, no? Think again. Look around you. See that poor, honest, hard-working man, who began the world upon nothing, but his health and his hands, see him raise independently, and in good credit, a numerous family; see him in process of time, by the mere force of his industry, aided by care and frugality, lay up while he can, six or eight hundred, or it may be, a thousand dollars, for his support, when his useful and active members can no longer contribute to the same, as heretofore. See that idle, speculating, smooth-tongued, plausible man, apply to him for the loan of his money. The hard-working honest man, well recollecting the severe blows and fatigued limbs, which his money cost him, hesitates, and exhibits some backwardness to part with it, but the applicant by fair speeches, sycophantic countenance, and many promises, that the money should be returned at three days notice, whenever wanted, obtains the loan. What

is the consequence? The borrower breaks shortly after obtaining the loan, and the poor man is done with his silver and his gold, and done with them forever! See that wicked and ungodly man raise his rifle with malice prepense, and terminate the existence of his wife, the mother of his children, the woman to whom he swore fidelity in presence of the powers above, and at the altar of his God. "Lord what is man?" See that other man beat his wife, and most barbarously trample her to death under his feet. See that guilty, sly, insinuating woman administer her arsenic to her honest and unsuspecting husband, with a design to procure his death, in which she succeeds, that she may sin without check or control with her guilty paramour. Now, let the impious unbeliever say whether the sacred scriptures represent mankind so much worse than we find them in fact, as to cause a reasonable and well founded suspicion of their authenticity? So far from this, that to the intelligent and reflecting mind, their truth and divine authority are strongly corroborated.

3. It was not consistent with the perfections of Deity to save them without an atonement. The justice and holiness of the Deity, and the dignity of the divine government forbid this.

4. No mere creature could save them, because no mere creature could sustain the wrath of God and make atonement for sin.

3. We are to show under this proposition that Christ saves sinners by making atonement.

By making atonement in the scripture sense we understand the Saviour doing that which would

render it perfectly consistent with the character of the Deity, and with his rectoral justice, and the dignity of the divine government to forgive sinners, and show mercy to offenders. Now, this Christ did by obeying the law and sustaining the penalty, Isaiah, xlii, 21; "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake, he shall magnify the law and make it honorable." Now, that Christ does save sinners by making atonement is evident from the following passages of sacred writ; Heb. ix, 14, 28; "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God; purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God;" verse 28; "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation;" Ephes. v, 2; "And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor;" Heb. x, 14; "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

III. I am to show that this true and faithful saying, "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is worthy of all acceptation, that is, that every person hearing of Jesus Christ ought to receive and love him. In illustrating this proposition I shall just answer the question, why this saying is worthy of all acceptation?

1. This saying is worthy of all acceptation, because it is the saying of God, all whose sayings are true and faithful. The apostle makes this

declaration under the afflatus of the divine spirit. Of consequence then, it is to be viewed and received as the declaration of God himself, and as such is entitled to the most cordial and hearty acceptation.

2. This saying is worthy of all acceptation, because in the scheme of salvation through Christ, God is more honored, than he could be in any other way we can discover. Now, sirs, the glory of God is the greatest object in the universe, being the great and ultimate end of his own pursuit, and ought to be ours. But Christ coming into the world to save sinners, promotes the honour and glory of the Deity more than any thing else in the universe. Therefore, should we all receive this faithful saying. Am I asked how Christ's coming into the world to save sinners glorifies God? I answer, by illustrating the divine perfections to a greater degree than could have been done in any other way. It is an unquestionable fact, that by the atonement of the blessed Jesus, God's perfections are more illustriously displayed than they would have been in any other way in which the Deity might have proceeded with men, as fallen sinners. Had he saved sinners without an atonement, that is, without Christ coming into the world, mercy might have triumphed, but justice must have received an incurable wound. On the other hand, had the Deity condemned the whole human race to the misery their crimes deserved, justice might have triumphed forever in their ruin; but in that case permit me to ask how mercy would have been

displayed? To this question there can be but one answer, and that must be, not at all. But in the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the salvation of sinners through the same, "Mercy and truth have met together and righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" Psalm, lxxxv, 10. Certainly then this saying is worthy of all acceptation. And permit me to put the question to the conscience of every soul in this assembly, how can we neglect it and be blameless?

3. This saying is worthy of all acceptation, because of the infinite love of Christ to our souls. How hath this blessed saviour commended his love to us by dying for our redemption; "Ephes. iii, 18, 19; "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth, and height, and to honor the law of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Hath Christ thus loved us? And are not we under the most solemn obligations to receive this saying as worthy of all acceptation?

4. This saying is certainly worthy of all acceptation, because thereby our eternal happiness is secured, which cannot be secured in any other way. That we are saved, if at all, through Christ must be admitted, and I believe is by all true believers. And according to the sacred records, we cannot be saved without this Saviour, agreeably to Acts, iv, 12; "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven amongst men whereby we can be saved." Certainly, then, if our salvation depends on the advent of the blessed Redeemer,

we ought to view this saying as worthy of all acceptation, and be duly influenced by it.

Learn from this subject,

1. The amazing love of God to man. Did Christ come into the world to save sinners, the chief of sinners? O what love is manifested here! Let us contemplate this infinite love of God to man, till our hearts glow with devout affection in return; "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." O astonishing declaration! Each syllable is replete with sweet prospects of salvation to the humble believer! Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; Christ, the glorious son of God; Christ, the equal of the eternal Father; Christ, the high and holy one, who inhabits eternity; Christ, the exalted lord of angels and men, came into the world to save sinners. What admirable condescension? What astonishing grace! Be amazed O Heavens! Stand in astonishment, O earth, for the Lord hath done it!! Christ Jesus, came into the world to save sinners. Yes, brethren, he who inhabited eternity, and the praises thereof, he, before whom angels and archangels veiled their faces in acts of most profound adoration; left the climes of immortal glory, and visited these dreary regions of mortality, that he might save the guilty and ill deserving. O what love, what condescension, was manifested here? What was the reception of this glorious personage? The most ignominious! His parentage poor! His birth place, a stable! His bed a manger! Carried off from the rage of a butchering tyrant into Egypt, to avoid assassination!

"Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not;" Isaiah, liii, 3. Such was his poverty, that he could say with propriety, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head;" Mat. viii, 20. To such ignominious and suffering condition in the world, did he expose himself, for the salvation of men, who is king of kings and lord of lords!

2. Learn the infinite love of God to man. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; sinners who deserved death and ruin; sinners up in arms against the righteous government of God; "Saying depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; sinners who were ready to stain their hands in the blood of the Saviour. Yet these, vile and guilty as they are, the blessed Jesus came to save. What astonishing and wonderful love is this!!

3. Learn the great encouragement sinners have to come to the blessed Jesus for life and salvation, and embrace him, as offered in the gospel. They are the very persons for effecting whose salvation he came into the world; they are the direct and express objects of his mission; Mat. ix, 12, 13; They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." It was for sinners Jesus died, and as says the celebrated Doct. Young,

"'Tis only guilt can justify his death,
"Nor that unless his death can justify,
"Relenting guilt, in Heaven's indulgent sight."

4. Learn the dreadful and aggravated guilt of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gracious overtures of the gospel. Such guilty conduct impeaches both the wisdom and goodness of God. It is replete with ingratitude. It is virtually to tell the Deity that we neither need nor wish his kindness; and that we will not accept the blessings which he gratuitously offers.

5. Learn the dreadful danger, and the sure and final destruction of all sinners, who do not accept this true and faithful saying. Sinners are utterly lost and ruined in themselves, as we have heard, nor is there any remedy which will prove effectual, in their deplorable case, but the Lord Jesus Christ and his invaluable atonement. How readily then ought they to accept this faithful saying, with all its benefits, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; "For there is none other name given under Heaven amongst men whereby we can be saved; Acts, iv, 12.

6. Let the people of the Lord love the blessed Saviour more and more, and taking a retrospect of their former dreadful situation, and being forgiven much, let them love much. Which may the Lord most graciously grant, for the blessed Redeemer's sake. AMEN.

SERMON XVIII.

THE GREATNESS OF THE SALVATION PROPOSED IN THE GOSPEL.

Hebrews, II, 3, First clause.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

THESE words are part of a letter written by St. Paul to the Hebrew christians, who were a people converted from Judaism to Christianity. The most of St. Paul's letters were written to people converted from Gentilism; and who had not been previously acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures. This, however, was not the case with the people to whom this letter was addressed. They were originally Jews, and well acquainted with the Old Testament scriptures. The apostle addresses them accordingly; and begins his letter with a reference to the ancient prophecies in the Jewish Scriptures; Heb. i, 1; "God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers, by the prophets;" verse 2; "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world." Now,

hereby the apostle intimates clearly that we are greatly distinguished above those, who only enjoyed the Old Testament scriptures; to make out which the more clearly, he digresses from this to the end of the chapter, in a description of the dignity, glory, and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ; showing decidedly his superiority to the angels of God and to every other creature, whether in Heaven or on earth. Read the chapter at large. The apostle in the first verse of the 2d chapter, fairly draws the following inferences: That we, having been spoken to by the adorable son of God himself, in these last times in the scriptures of the New Testament, ought to give the most earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, and reasons thus, verse 2; "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression thereof received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape," in the language of my text, "if we neglect so great salvation? In the farther prosecution of this subject, I design,

I. To speak something of the greatness of this salvation.

II. I shall show who may be said to be neglecters of this salvation.

III. What they shall not escape, who neglect it. And

IV. Why they shall not escape. And then conclude with some inferences, and application.

I. I am to speak something of the greatness of this salvation, and show why it is called a great salvation.

1. This is called a great salvation, because of the greatness of the author, or deviser of this salvation. When great personages address themselves to business, we rightfully look for something proportionably great and distinguished to be effected, and this is agreeable to the common sense, and common expectations of mankind. When we hear of the supreme council of a great and mighty nation deliberating, who does not look for something much greater to be effected, than if he heard of the convention of a few unenlightened savages only? I presume not one. But who is the author and inventor of this salvation? Who sat in council when the glorious scheme of redeeming fallen man was invented? The eternal God! The father, son and holy ghost; that great and almighty being, who, in the beginning, laid the foundations of the earth, set fast the solid mountains, and stretched out the heavens as a curtain. That august, that majestic, that almighty God, who holds all nature in his hand, and rides fearfully on the wings of the tempest, and manages the storm. He it was, who invented this great salvation, in infinite wisdom, and determined it in infinite goodness. Is it not then a great salvation? But who became the ransom? Who interposed between the sword of justice, and the sinner's blood, for which that awful sword was furnished, and removed the obstacles which obstructed the sinner's acceptance with God? It was that Lord Jesus Christ, who is God equal with the father; Psalm, xl, 7, 8; "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me. I

delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart." It was he "In whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" Col. ii, 9. It was he who could control the raging surges of the great deep at pleasure, by a single word of his power; Mat. viii, 26; "Then he arose and rebuked the winds, and the sea, and there was a calm." It was he who could heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, teach the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the lame to leap for joy. Is it not then a great salvation? But who applies the purchased salvation? Is it not the Holy Ghost, the third person of the adorable trinity, equal with the father and the son, in dignity, glory, and honour. Is not this a great salvation then? In promoting which all the persons of the adorable trinity have been engaged from eternity.

2. This salvation is a great salvation, and must be so viewed; if we consider the glorious price by which it is procured, which was no less than the blood of the son of God; I. Pet. i, 18, 19; "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb, without blemish, and without spot." Now, seeing it is common amongst men to estimate things at the price for which they sell, how great must be this christian salvation, and how inestimable its value? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

3. How great must this salvation appear when we consider its nature! In what does this

salvation consist, and from what does it save its subjects? It was declared by that celestial messenger, who announced the miraculous conception of the virgin Mary, that the holy thing which should be born of her should be called Jesus; because he should save his people from their sins. Then this salvation consists radically in saving people from their sins. Is it not then a great salvation? It saves from enmity of heart, from opposition to God, from intemperance, from impurity, from revenge, from dishonesty, from every vile and beastly crime. Here let me observe, that whatever may be the pretences of mankind to an experience of grace, or to whatever church they may belong, if they are not saved from the practice and love of sin, they are not the subjects of this salvation.

4. It must appear a great salvation, when we consider the natural evil and punishment, from which it saves its subjects. It saves from that wrath of God, which is justly due to sin, and which will eventually overtake every sinner of the human family, who remains impenitent and ungodly. It saves from the accusations and stings of our own consciences the most dreadful tormentors, from the worm that never dies, and the fire which is never quenched; from the curse of the divine law; in a word, from all that is imported in eternal damnation.

5. This must appear a great salvation, when we consider the positive good and happiness, in the possession of which, it places those who embrace it; the great and adorable God himself; Mat.

xxv, 21; "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord;" Rev. xvii, 15; "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell amongst them." Jesus Christ the blessed saviour; John, xiv, 3; "And if I go and prepare a place I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am ye may be also;" the best society; Heb. xii, 22—24; "But ye are come unto Mt. Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

6. This is a great salvation considered with respect to its duration. It is perpetuity of bliss, that is bliss indeed. But this salvation puts its happy subjects in possession of bliss that endureth forever and hath no end, therefore it is a great salvation.

II. We are to show who may be said to be neglectors of this salvation. I presume it must be well known to you in the general what neglecting a thing is. When a good thing of any kind is in our offer, and no suitable attention is paid to the thing proposed, here is a neglect, in its true and proper sense. Then they are all neglecting this salvation, who are not paying it that serious attention which the importance of its nature

demands. The ignorant man who knows nothing of this great salvation, neither is endeavouring to know, is neglecting this salvation. Those who are men of enquiry and research, and all whose enquiries are spent on other and inferior things, and who make no serious enquiry about the salvation offered in the gospel, are neglectors of this great salvation.

2. The thoughtless, who spend no reasonable portion of their time in meditating on the nature, excellence, and glory of this salvation, are neglectors, notwithstanding they may have had some knowledge concerning it.

3. We conceive, whatever be the extent of our christian knowledge, or the frequency of our meditations on divine subjects, yet if we live prayerless, and without any due application to almighty God for an interest in this salvation, we must be viewed as its neglectors. It is impossible that we can duly estimate this salvation, if we will not so much as ask for it. Prayerless people are certainly living without God in the world. What consistent idea, my friend, can you form of a prayerless believer in Christ, or an honest hearted humble christian, who never desires communion with God?

4. Those who scarcely ever read the bible, setting no store by that precious book, are neglectors of this salvation. Nothing is more common than for those who are duly attentive to, and deeply concerned about this salvation, to make themselves well acquainted with the lively oracles of God. The bible is to them the book of books; because

it contains the words of eternal life, and points to the precious Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This, I presume, is the general disposition of christians toward the sacred volume. And this, I think, the people of God generally feel. Consequently, then, I conclude, that those who experience no such feelings, are to be viewed as neglectors of the christian salvation.

5. If we do not attend the public worship of God and endeavour to cultivate a growing acquaintance with Christ, we are neglectors of this great salvation. Are not the house and ordinances of God dear to his humble followers? Hear the psalmist's exercises on this subject; Psalm, lxxxiv, 10; "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." And we conceive the ordinances of God's house are still dear to all who know his love.

6. Those who are not making this great salvation the main leading business of life, are neglecting it, notwithstanding they may pay it some occasional attention; Luke, xiv, 26; "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Then we see, according to this passage, a little occasional attention paid to religion, or making it a mere bye business, will not do. Much more is required.

7. Those who do not use their endeavours for promoting this great salvation in the souls of others,

especially their children and servants, as God may give them opportunity, are neglecting this holy concern, and acting offensively in the sight of the most high God. This shows too plainly we do not estimate this salvation highly; because what we esteem highly we generally wish to help our children to if in our power.

III. I am to show what they shall not escape, who neglect this great salvation; and,

1. They shall not escape death. They as well as other men, must die. It is true the saints themselves do not escape death, nor do they wish it. An eternal abode in this world would not be a desideratum to a man of genuine piety. Like St. Paul, he would rather depart and be with Christ, which is far better. But he escapes the sting of death, which he greatly prefers.

2. They shall not escape the judgment, how desirous soever they might be of such an event; II. Cor. v, x; "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This judgment will be attended with indescribable joy and bliss to the people of the Lord; Luke, xxi, 27, 28; "And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory, and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." But the same event shall be attended with ineffable terror to the wicked and ungodly, and fill them with the most overwhelming consternation. See an account of their

dismay and terror; Rev. vi, 14, to the end; "And the heaven departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and great men, and the rich men, and the chief men, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and the rocks, fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand!" Here, sirs, is a specimen of that awful consternation and dismay, which shall overtake the wicked and ungodly in the day of final audit, and which they shall not escape.

3. They shall not escape the dire sentence which shall consign them to eternal ruin; Mat. xxv, 41; "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This dreadful sentence, their pained and astonished ears must hear, and they shall not escape.

4. They shall not escape the execution of this dreadful sentence; Mat. xxv, 46; "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Poor condemned, distressed, and wretched souls! No friend, no intercessor now. The element, the mediatorial hour of gospel grace is gone, and gone forever; Prov. i, 28—31; "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel, and

despised all my reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices."

5. They shall not escape self accusation and torment forever, and the righteous vials of divine indignation. That world of misery to which they go, is the dark and doleful region of despair, where the worm never dies, and where the fire is never quenched; where hope can never come, but dark melancholy broods with her raven wings forever.

6. They shall not escape eternity of pain; Rev. xiv, 11; "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." I am quite aware this is a point against which not a few contend. But with how little consistency, the candid and intelligent can be at no loss to discover. This is a subject on which we know nothing only from sacred writ. The lively oracles of God are the great umpire which must settle this contest. These speak a plain and unequivocal language on this important subject; and that a language too, not easily misunderstood. Its decisions on this subject are clear, plain, and unequivocal, and to be received as that which lays the question quite at rest.

7. They shall not escape an aggravated ruin, and that according to the privileges they have enjoyed; Luke, xii, 47, 48; "That servant who knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten

with many stripes, but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whomsoever men have committed much, of him will they ask the more."

IV. We are to show why the neglectors of this salvation shall not escape.

1. One great reason why they shall not escape is, that they are already under the arrests of the divine law; Gal. iii, 10; "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse of the law; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Now, so far are sinners from continuing in all things written in the book of the law to do them, that they are violating that law every day and hour of their lives; consequently they are exposed to the curse. And rejecting Jesus Christ, the author of this salvation, they have no way of escaping the curse. Of course, therefore, they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

2. Another reason why they shall not escape is because they are not qualified for any other place but that of eternal pain. Having never become the subjects of this salvation, they have no love to God and consequently cannot be happy in heaven, according to the constituted order of the Deity. As the human soul can never be happy in the enjoyment of an object, unless it possesses a taste for the object to be enjoyed. It is contrary to all human experience; that a soul is ever happy in

the enjoyment of any thing for which it has no taste, and more especially with which it is disgusted. I appeal to all human experience. Now, God being an infinitely holy God, and the exercises of heaven infinitely holy exercises, the soul who has no holiness of temper, never can enjoy this holy God and these celestial exercises; and therefore cannot escape.

3. The divine determination, threatening, and veracity render their destruction sure, who neglect this great salvation; Psalm, xi, 6; "On the wicked God shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup;" Psalm, ix, 17; "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" Mark, xvi, 16; "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Learn from this subject,

1. The great importance of the soul's redemption. Did this subject employ the counsels of the trinity from eternity? Then how precious must this redemption be? Did the adorable son of God pay the price of his precious blood for this redemption? O then how precious! Since it is common to estimate things according to the price they cost.

2. Learn their guilt and folly, who neglect this salvation. The commandment of God is to receive it; I. John, iii, 23; "For this is the commandment of God, that ye believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another." How aggravated then must be their guilt, who disobey? Their folly consists in neglecting the only way of

securing their own eternal happiness, and escaping eternal misery. Was there ever equal folly, was there ever equal madness?

3. Learn how numerous the neglectors of this salvation are! How many remain quite ignorant of this great and precious salvation, neither knowing, nor caring to know, any thing about it? How many never make it the subject of their meditations, having their hearts set on other things, and filled with the world, while God and heaven are neglected, and their own souls exposed to eternal ruin? How many are living without God in the world, restraining prayer before him, and exercising no acknowledgement of the almighty? How is the matter with you, my dear friends? and realise, that if you are prayerless, you are Christless and in great danger of losing your immortal souls. How many are utterly neglecting the public worship of God and his sanctuary service who wait not on the Lord in his house? How many are neglecting the precious word of God, not even attempting to make themselves acquainted with its sacred contents? How many are there that are so far from making this great salvation the leading business of their lives, that they are treating it with the utmost degree of neglect, on all occasions, and not seldom with contempt. May the Lord have mercy on such contemptuous neglectors of this salvation, and show them the error of their ways before it is eternally too late. AMEN.

SERMON XIX.

LOVE TO GOD AND MAN, THE ESSENCE OF TRUE RELIGION.

Mark, XII, 30, 31.

"*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*"

IT is the uniform and unvarying testimony of sacred writ, that true religion consists essentially in love to God, and love to man. This is the sense of Moses and the prophets, of Jesus and the apostles; and without this love no man will ever see God's face in mercy. Without love to God no religious duty can ever be discharged aright, neither will it ever be acceptable to the Almighty. If we consider the principle of divine love detached from any thing we now call a religious duty, nothing is left but an empty name, nothing that can render the name acceptable to almighty God. Suppose divine love detached from faith, and

there is nothing left but a mere theoretical opinion that has no more holiness in it than believing that there once existed such men as Julius Cæsar or Alexander the great. Suppose the christian grace we call zeal, divested of the principle of divine love, there is nothing left but a blind unmeaning fury, quite disgusting and unamiable. If love be detached from patience, there is nothing left but a mere stoical sullenness, utterly devoid of any thing well pleasing in the sight of God. But if the principle of divine love be attached to these several things, they become so many important interesting duties highly pleasing, and acceptable to God.

The connection of our text is this: The Sadducees, a sect amongst the Jews, who denied the resurrection of the body, and not only so, but also the existence of angels and spirits, came to Jesus Christ on a certain occasion and thought to put him to silence and confusion on the doctrine of the resurrection; for this purpose, they put to him the following question: Master, say they, you know Moses commanded, that if a man marry a wife, and die without issue, that his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now, there were with us seven brethren, and the oldest married a wife and died without issue; the second married her, and dying without issue, the third married her, &c. until the seven had her, and all died without offspring, and last of all, the woman died also. Now, said they, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her. This, they supposed, was a question

clogged with insuperable difficulties according to the doctrine of the resurrection. But the blessed Jesus, with that spirit, that wisdom, and moderation, for which he was so famous, set the difficulty quite aside, and answered the question entirely to the satisfaction of the hearers ; " And Jesus said unto them, do you not therefore greatly err, not knowing the scriptures, neither the power of God ? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage ; but are as the angels which are in heaven. This appears to have been thought by them that heard it, a complete answer to the captious question of the Scribes and Pharisees ; and that it set aside the difficulty they proposed.

There was present on this occasion a certain Scribe, who perceiving that Christ had answered well, put to him a question, which had long been disputed among the Jews, saying, Master, " Which is the first commandment of all ?" On this question the Jews were not agreed ; some said the commandment respecting the sabbath was the greatest ; others, that respecting circumcision ; others, that respecting the passover. On this subject, this scribe interrogated this very wise and prudent teacher, that he might obtain his opinion. To this question, Jesus Christ answered in the words of my text, " Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul," &c. Thus, does the blessed Saviour show those Jews, and through them all mankind, that the great duties of the moral law were far

superior to those of the ceremonial, and were to command the supreme attention of all mankind.

I design to show,

I. What it is to love the Lord as required in my text, with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength.

II. Why it is our duty thus to love the Lord.

III How supreme love to God will operate on the human mind, that we may know whether we love him or not.

IV. What it is in the scripture sense to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

V. Why we ought thus to love them, and then conclude with some inferences and application.

I. I am to show what it is to love the Lord as required in my text. This is to love the Lord according to the whole sum of the capacity he has given us, and to devote ourselves to his service, with all the powers of our souls and bodies; That we love him supremely, or, more than we love any other being in the universe. If we love any other being or all other beings put together better than we love God, we do not love him supremely, and consequently not with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. Be it well recollected, however, that loving God with all the heart, does not imply that we love no other being but himself, which idea would go to contradict manifestly half the sacred pages. Our duty is to love a number of other objects besides the one only true and eternal God, say our wives, our husbands, our children, our parents, our friends, &c. and the very text itself, requires us to love our

neighbours as ourselves. But we then love God according, and up to scripture requirement, that is with all the capacity which the Deity has given us, when we love him greatly in preference to every other being in the universe.

II. I am to show why it is our duty thus to love God.

1. Because God is infinitely excellent, and infinitely more worthy than any other being. Now, I presume, sirs, it is a dictate of right reason and common sense, that the object which is lovely and excellent in itself ought to be loved, for its loveliness and excellence; and always in proportion to the quantity of these which it possesses; but God is possessed of infinite loveliness and excellence; therefore God is to be loved supremely, and with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. This appears to me fair and conclusive reasoning on the subject. Now, let us hear what is fairly and unequivocally the teaching of holy scripture on the subject. For this, I think, is to the same amount; Psalm, viii, 1; "O Lord! our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens;" compare this with the last verse of the preceding psalm; "I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness." Now, does not the passage above quoted give the reason why he would do so; and is not that reason the excellence of the divine name? Psalm, lxxxix, 5, 6, 7; "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord! thy faithfulness also, in the congregation of the saints. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of

the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." Now, sirs, is not the plain reason here given, why the heavens shall praise the Lord; the excellence of the divine character, and is not the same the reason manifestly, why he was to be feared in the assemblies of the saints, and to be had in reverence by all those round about him; compare Psalm, cxlviii, 13; "Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent." Now is not the excellence of the divine character here, given as the reason, and the only one that is mentioned too why the people should praise the Lord? And is it not a good one? Then I presume we have said rightly according to the holy scriptures, as well as right reason, that we ought to love God for his excellence and glory.

2. We ought to love God because he is our creator. We stand in a very near relation to the Lord. He made us, and gave us the existence we enjoy, and not we ourselves; and therefore we ought to love him. I presume it is admitted on all hands, that the child ought to reverence and love the parents. The reason given for this amongst mankind is a good one, because they are the instrumental cause of his existence. Now God is the prime and efficient cause of that existence. And therefore he stands in a nearer relation than that of an earthly parent. But if the relation a parent bears be a good reason why the child should love him, then the relation God bears to us all is a still stronger reason why we should

love him. For the relation is still nearer.

3. We ought to love God because he is our preserver and benefactor. "For in him we live, move, and have our being," Acts 17. 18. Surely mankind reason thus, and feel thus, in every other case and why not here? If a man be exposed to imminent danger from which he cannot free himself, and another generously interpose and deliver him, is it not the common sense and the common feeling of mankind, that the person thus delivered is under great obligation to him who effected his deliverance? But, sirs, permit me to ask, who has ever wrought for us such deliverances as the Great God. Who delivered you, my dear friend, from the thousand dangers that impended over you, when a helpless, a crying or a smiling infant, you were rocked in the cradle; and when the most assiduous care of the most affectionate mother, could not have preserved your feeble, your infantile frame? Was it not your God? Then feel your obligations.

To convince us of our entire dependence on God only, let us consider how little we can do for ourselves. Can we maintain our lives? Can we preserve our health without his good hand continually upon us? Do we not plainly feel we cannot? Can we obtain the common necessaries for our subsistence without the Lord? Can the most careful and frugal farmer cause the clouds of Heaven to discharge their necessary contents on his parched and withering fields? Or on the other hand, when those clouds are discharging themselves too copiously, and greatly to the injury of his farm, can

he command them with effect to cease? We all know he cannot. How dependent, how entirely dependent then are we all upon the Almighty?

To convince us that God is our supreme and generous benefactor, let us consider for a moment the blessings we receive from his bounty. Does he not bestow upon us our health? Does it not gush in our frame in a thousand springs? What an admirably complicated machine is the human frame? What numerous pins does it contain? And what is the dire consequence, if but one be drawn? Is it not sickness, disease, death, or what is infinitely worse than death, lunacy, derangement or madness? How kind, how gracious, how good then is that Almighty Being who keeps this most complicated machine so long in order? O my dear friend, do you enjoy fine health, good spirits, vivacity and cheerfulness? Bless your God, feel your obligations, discharge your duty. Is not here good and ample reason why you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Are you surrounded with pleasant friends, connections, parents, children, brothers, and sisters? Who gives these? Is it not the Almighty Lord? Oh then! under what obligations are you to this good and indulgent God? How much my dear hearers, does our happiness depend on social bliss? Could we be happy in everlasting solitude? We feel we could not. And in such a case life itself would not be a desideratum. Then love the Lord with all thy heart, with all thy mind &c. for here is ample reason.

Is not our safety of the Lord? Prov. xiv, 21; "The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord;" Isaiah xiv, 30; "And the needy shall lie down in safety."

Hath not God given us a revelation of his will? How great a blessing is this revelation? How blessed are its effects in society? We who live under the light of the glorious gospel, and are blessed by its benign influence, seldom realize what is the situation of human creatures, who are not illuminated by its benign rays, either directly or indirectly. And we seldom form adequate conceptions of so deplorable a condition. See the ancient Greeks and Romans, marching in solemn procession and prostrating themselves before some grim ox of the forest. See the ancient Carthaginians, sacrificing the very flower of their youth to devils. See the South Sea Islanders doing the very same, when the ship Duff arrived at Otaheite Anno Domini, 1796. See the Hindostan wife, when her husband has deceased laid on the same funeral pile that consumes his dead body and reduced to ashes with it. See the devotees of the frightful idol Juggernaut, prostrating themselves, in their mad, and enfuriated zeal before the wheels of his enormous car, and there crushed into a thousand atoms by those ensanguined wheels. Now, sirs, compare these things with the mild, the rational and gentle manners of those in whose hearts the meek and lowly Saviour bears rule and mark the difference. Now say, my friends, who enjoy the gospel light, ought not ye to love the Lord who has conferred on you so invaluable a blessing as the gospel

light! "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart &c." Now, say, my reflecting friend ought you not thus to love him? Has not God given Jesus Christ his son to die for us? John iii. 16; "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." Was not this marvellous kindness and condescension in the ever blessed and adorable God, to give up his own well beloved son to die for a lost and ruined world? Is he not then our supreme benefactor, and as such are we not under solemn obligations to love him? Here then we think are sufficient reasons why we ought to "Love the Lord our God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength."

III. I am to show how love to God will operate on the human heart that we may know whether or not we are possessed of this holy affection.

1. I presume it will produce frequent and affectionate thoughts of the beloved object; agreeably to Psalm, cxxxix, 17, 18; "How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God! How great is the sum of them; if I would number them, they are more than the sand; when I awake I am stil with thee." The pious man's thoughts soar much to God; religion is uppermost on his mind. Now, it is said of the wicked man, Psalm, x, 4; "God is not in all his thoughts." Not so with the devotional man who loves his God. His thoughts naturally and pleasantly flow out to his God. When he awakes in the silent watches of the night, his thoughts natively flow out to his God. The excel-

lencies of the divine character, and the glories of the divine administration occupy his attention, and are the great subjects of his reflection. These thoughts, as saith the psalmist, are precious. Is not this the nature of true affection in all cases. How is the matter with the faithful and virtuous wife, when the business of her husband detains him long from home? Does not the image of the dear man she loves present itself to her mind a thousand times? And the same with the faithful and affectionate husband, when separated a length of time from his wife?

2. If we sincerely and supremely love God, we will greatly desire and delight much in communion and fellowship with him; Solomon's song, viii, 1—4; "O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I should kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised; I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me; I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand should be under my head and his right hand should embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please." This is the nature of true affection in all cases. We all affect the society and enjoyment of those we love, and if we supremely love God, we will aspire after the enjoyment of him also. A necessary consequence of enjoying communion with God is that we will be careful to wait on him in the ordinances of divine institution; and will be at pains to do this so far as we may have it in

our power. The ordinances of God's house being the meeting places betwixt Christ and his friends, are dear to the people of God.

3. If we love God it will render us anxious and uneasy to be deprived of enjoying him. When the man of sincere and ardent piety cannot have that sweet freedom of access to God which he has once enjoyed, it fills him with sorrow and distress, and leaves a vacuum in his breast which the world with all its wealth and enjoyments can never fill. There is in the mind of the genuine and sincere christian a thirsting after God which nothing but the enjoyment of God can satisfy. Witness the exercises of pious Job; Job, xxiii, 3, 4; "O that I knew where I might find him! I would come even to his seat, I would order my cause before him, I would fill my mouth with argument;" Job, xxix, 2, 3; "O that I were as in months past! as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined on my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;" Psalm, lxxxiv, from the first throughout; "How amiable are thy tabernacles O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God, &c.

4. True love to God will render us steady and careful to please him by a uniform obedience to his commandments; John, xiv, 15; "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" John, xv, 14; "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you;" John, ii, 3; "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

John, v, iii; "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and that his commandments are not grievous."

IV. I am to show what it is in the scripture sense to love our neighbours as we love ourselves.

This does not mean that we shall neglect our own business to attend to that of other people. Common sense revolts at this, and the holy scriptures require no such thing; but directly the reverse; I. Tim. v, 8; "But if any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." The best way on earth for human affairs to go on well, is for every man to attend strictly to his own business, and do it well, except in certain heavy jobs, where one or a few hands cannot possibly perform them, there, neighbours ought to assist each other, and all good and generous neighbours will cheerfully do it.

Neither does loving our neighbours as we love ourselves mean that we shall take as much care of our neighbour's soul as we take of our own, which in its very nature is a thing impossible, For if we are ever so willing to do good to our neighbour's souls, we have not the same control over them, and their passions, which we have over our own, which renders the thing impracticable, therefore this cannot be the thing required. I presume we then love our neighbours as we love ourselves, when we are sensible of, and regard their rights as we are sensible of and regard our own. When we avoid injuring them as carefully

as we avoid injuring ourselves; when we wish and pray for their salvation as we wish and pray for our own. Now, sirs, it appears to me that the man who is exercised thus may be said to love his neighbour as he loves himself. And to me these things appear both practicable and reasonable. Permit me on this subject, to put a few interrogations to your consciences, designed to bring this matter to your feelings, and your hearts, as well as to your understandings. How well do you love yourself, my dear friend? So well you answer, that I do myself no designed or intentional injury. Well, never do your neigbour any designed or intentional injury, then are you loving your neighbour as yourself, both in scripture sense and common sense. You love yourself well enough not to suffer any body to wrong you out of what little you possess, or obtain it without value received. Love your neighbour so well as never to obtain his property thus, nor desire to do so, then I think you love your neighbour in scripture sense as you love yourself. And surely this is something perfectly practicable. How well do you love yourself, I ask again? So well, answers every man of candour and intelligence, that I would not wish any body to circulate false, unfounded, or malicious and evil reports concerning my character, to its great injury, and to the letting me down in the estimation of my fellow men. Well, love your neighbour so well as never to serve him so; and then I think in scripture account you love him as you love yourself. These

things, I presume, amount to what is intended by the divine Saviour in this sacred, this reasonable, this practicable precept.

The apostle John informs us how we are to love, "Not in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth;" I. John, iii, 18.

There is a kind of love much in currency amongst mankind, which is remarkably cheap, costing little or nothing, and it is just about as useless as cheap. I mean that love which consists in word and in tongue, in scrapes, and bows, and pretences. This is not the kind the apostle recommends, which is in deed and in truth.

V. I am to show why we ought to love our fellow men as ourselves. That God has commanded it, is a sufficient reason, should I say no more. But this is not fully up to our design, which is rather to show why we are bound in reason to do this; or to point out that on which this reasonable commandment is founded.

1. We ought to love them as ourselves, because of our common nature and that every man is our brother. Certainly members of the same family ought to live in love. But we all are brothers, members of the same family and therefore ought to live in love; Acts xvii. 26; "And hath made of one blood, all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation."

Well am I aware of the objections to this scripture doctrine of the descent of all men from one common pair. And justly I trust, I estimate it;

That is, as the dream of self conceit empty Philosophy and vain glory. And, sirs, when the empty dreams of self conceited philosophers, and the precious word of my God come into competition, I shall never hesitate long how to decide. Besides, what is there in reason and in true and correct philosophy to cause in my mind a rational doubt of the truth of sacred writ on this subject, "That God hath made of one blood all men to dwell on the earth &c." That unhappy description of our fellow men, the Africans and their descendants, are in the most degraded situation of any of the human race of my acquaintance, and under the greatest disadvantages for appearing well. But even amongst these I find the same dispositions, the same tempers, the same fears, the same hopes &c. with other men, and the same capacities to a sufficient degree to convince me that they are of the same common stock. I am quite aware of the answer of self conceit and vain philosophy. Ah! say they, see the difference in the extent of their knowledge. and that of others, Europeans or their descendents. Conceded at once. But let me turn your attention to the difference of opportunity also. The utmost pains taken with the one from infancy, carefully schooled from childhood, associating with the enlightened circle; the strictest pains taken to communicate light and knowledge. What is the opportunity on the other hand? Herding from infancy with ignorance; no knowledge of a letter in the alphabet, a bed in the ashes; a tremendous blow on the head, if a step be taken wrong, spoken to only with such frowns

and supercilious airs as are calculated to excite the most dread, fear and tremour. For the fairness of this statement, I appeal to the knowing and candid in all slave countries. Now, sirs, to candour I appeal, is it fair, these things considered, to draw the conclusion, that the African is far inferior to the American in point of capacity, and therefore cannot be of the same species. Let the reflecting and the candid say. I have a black woman in my family eighteen or nineteen years of age who reads beautifully, and to the astonishment of all who have heard her. This girl when about six or seven years of age went to school with two of my daughters, the present Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Bruce of Shelbyville, and according to the best of my recollection progressed just about as fast as they did. And I have vanity enough to think they learned altogether as well as other people's daughters. This girl went to school but very little over six months, and I think I am quite safe in saying she did not exceed nine. And she is a good reader. O how was I astonished, some two or three years ago, on reading in a Carolina paper an ordinance passed by the corporation of the City of Savannah to the following amount: that any person convicted of an attempt to teach a slave, or black man or woman to read, should be fined in —— the sum —— dollars, the amount not recollected. I stood in perfect amazement! And the reflection of my mind was "Lord what is man?" When a few months afterward, I saw in another southern paper, that a considerable part of the said City of Savannah was laid in ashes; I must

acknowledge it struck me with no great surprise. And O how was I astonished, when some time ago I saw an account of Virginia, checking by an Act of the Legislature, the benevolent attempts made by a few pious, and Godly individuals, to teach the poor degraded Africans to read. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon.,' What! The great, the magnanimous, the exemplary Virginia: first in the glorious revolution, in the ensanguined contest for liberty; first in the counsels of the nation; Virginia, which has furnished to the Union four Presidents out of five, sitting in Legislative deliberation, passing a law to keep a considerable portion of their fellow men, in midnight and Egyptian darkness respecting the God that made them, by punishing those who would attempt to instruct them in reading the holy scriptures! Is it possible! Again I cannot but exclaim with the Psalmist, Lord what is man! This appears to me in point of baseness, moral turpitude, and downright finished tyranny, to take precedence of all national acts, of which I have ever read, not excepting even the piracies of the Algerines themselves.

2. Another good reason why we ought to love our neighbour as ourselves, is that thereby the peace and happiness of society would be promoted, and harmony universally prevail. If all men loved their neighbours as themselves, would you hear from day to day of the base, the bloody duellist challenging his quondam friend to what is very falsely called the field of honor? Never, sirs, never, never! If all men had loved their neighbors as themselves, would the American soil ever have

drunk the blood of a Hamilton, many years the favorite of our immortal Washington? Had all men loved others as themselves, would our soil ever have smoked with the blood of a Decatur; the gallant tar to whom the American people owe so much; mighty as an host; and who paid the Algerine pirates their tribute in powder and ball, instead of silver and gold; in which the mighty nations of Europe had paid them for centuries. Yet this gallant man falls, and bleeds, and dies a victim to a barbarous, wicked, murderous custom, which might disgrace the most rude and tawny sons of the American forest. Sirs, did this holy love to our neighbours universally, prevail; wars, assassinations and murders fell! would cease, and earth, at present, a bloody, jarring, confused place, would resemble that Heaven of peace, to which Christians go. But alas this is not yet the case, may the Lord hasten it in his time.

1. Learn the reasonableness of that service God requires at our hand, and the undoubted right he has to require it. The sum of the service the Lord requires, is to love himself with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbours as ourselves. Is it not perfectly reasonable we should do so, seeing God is the greatest and best character in the Universe; and infinitely excellent, and seeing he is our creator, preserver and benefactor, to whom we are under the most solemn obligations? No man on earth, can with effect, gainsay the reasonableness of loving this God. Men may indulge their guilty and wicked passions and inclinations, in the face of reason and duty, and every

thing else that is sacred. But they can never justify their conduct in the view of illuminated reason. Sinner, thoughtless, profane man, if you saw a son not only insulting and insolently treating the very best of fathers, but even assaulting and beating his person, what would you think of such a son? Would you not conclude he was the vilest wretch in existence? Now, profane sinner, blasphemer of high Heaven's God; if you are capable of forming any correct calculations, or balancing nicely the distinction of things, will you please to inform me how much better you are employed, when profaning God's name and violating his holy laws?

And has not the Deity a reasonable, and well founded right to require our service, seeing he hath made us, and preserves us, and gives us all the blessings we enjoy?

2. Let us take occasion from this subject, to examine ourselves, whether or not we possess this holy affection required in our text? Are the thoughts of God precious to our souls? If we should attempt to number them, are they more than the sand? Do we hunger and thirst after communion with God? Arewe restless and uneasy without the enjoyment of the divine presence? Do we endeavour faithfully to keep the commandments of God?

3. Learn that all profane, wicked, intemperate, impure, quarrelsome people, are in the highway to everlasting ruin, and will eventually reap the fruit of their doings in eternal woe, unless they repent. May God grant that repentance for Jesus sake

AMEN & AMEN.

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